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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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POLL RESULTS

Do you believe federalization will bring prosperity to the CNMI?

Yes	159
No	85
Unsure	33
No opinion	10

Sunday, December 06, 2009

PANDEMIC ALERT STATUS

PHASE 6

As of December 4, 2009

Phase 6: The pandemic phase, is an indication that a global pandemic is underway.

For more information about the H1N1 flu, contact DPH at 236-8797, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm, 234-8950 during after hours, e-mail cnmipheoc@gmail.com, or visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

Source: CNMI Department of Public Health, World Health Organization

INSIDE

Martial Rule

The Philippine president imposed martial law Saturday on a southern province where 57 people were killed in a political massacre, while security forces detained members of a powerful clan accused of plotting the attack and fomenting a rebellion.

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CUC seeks dismissal of class action to recover $4.2M in refund. **PAGE 5**

US Labor works on prevailing wage determinations in CNMI

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Labor is now providing guidance for prevailing wage determinations for use in the CNMI effective Nov. 28, the date when the U.S. federal government took over CNMI immigration.

But the USDOL notice was published a few days after federalization, in the Dec. 4 Federal Register.

The prevailing wage is different from, and is generally higher than, the minimum wage.

In the CNMI, the current minimum wage is $4.55 an hour, and will increase by 50 cents every year until it reaches the federal wage floor of $7.25 an hour.

USDOL's Employment and Training Administration, in a notice, said it is now "providing guidance about the implementation of the issuance of prevailing wage determinations for applications in the CNMI."

The USDOL notice can be accessed at http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-28963.pdf.

It said the CNMI Department of Labor, as of Nov. 28, would normally be charged with the issuance of prevailing wage determinations under the various regulations governing such determinations.

"Since there is very little time between Nov. 28, 2009, and Jan. 1, 2010, the Department has deter-

See US LABOR on Page 4

Gubernatorial race winner known today

Fitial

Hofschneider

Count of rest of absentee ballots to finish by 6pm

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The remaining absentee ballots that will be counted today will decide the historic runoff election for governor of the Commonwealth.

See WINNER on Page 4

Census job fair draws hundreds

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A young man prepares to fill out an application form before taking the exam during Saturday's 2010 CNMI Census job fair at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Three more job fairs will be held on Saipan, including the one today at the Saipan Southern High School, from 5pm to 8pm, for over 350 needed positions including enumerators and field operations supervisors.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Uden Asperin, 50, patiently waited in line Saturday morning to turn in his application form and take the exam, hoping to become one of the needed enumerators for the 2010 CNMI Census.

"I'm applying as a part-time enumerator and if I get accepted, I will be able to supplement my income," the father of two told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview after taking the exam.

See CENSUS on Page 4

Local

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), above-center, confers with Rep. Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan), his back to the camera, during a break in the House session on Friday. Also in photo, below-from left, Legislative Bureau's Linda Muna, House clerk Evelyn Fleming, and House legal counsel Joey San Nicolas.

IN TIME FOR TODAY'S EFFECTIVE DATE

House OKs rules change to comply with Open Gov't Act

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives adopted on Friday a resolution amending its rules to incorporate a recently ratified popular initiative applying the Open Government Act to the Legislature effective today, but not after the lower chamber suspended its own rules.

Among other things, the Legislature now has to respond to citizen requests for public records within 10 days. Failure to grant those requests subjects them to penalties.

After deferring action on Rep. Tina Sablan's House Resolution 16-103 on Thursday mainly because there were only 14 members present, the House again failed to muster at least 15 members to be present during its Friday meeting.

Only 13 House members were present on Friday afternoon for the voting on Sablan's resolution, which requires a comprehensive amendment to the House rules to bring the lower chamber into compliance with the Open Government Act of 2007 and "in order to respect the will of the voters."

House Rule XVI Section 1 requires three-fourths or at least 15 members to amend or repeal the Official Rules of the House of Representatives.

But on Friday afternoon, the House suspended Rule XVI Section 1 to be able to amend the House rules and comply with the Open Government Act initiative ratified by CNMI voters during the Nov. 7 general elections.

Members also needed at least 24 hours to review any proposed changes to the rules, just like Sablan's resolution introduced on Thursday.

"If we don't change the rules, the law is going to change that," said House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) during Friday's session.

On a 12-0 vote with one abstention, the House adopted changes to its rules to incorporate the Open Government Act.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) abstained from voting on H.R. 16-103.

The 12 members who voted "yes" on the adoption of the resolution were: Rep. Edwin Aldan, Rep. David Apatang, Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan), Floor Leader Joseph Camacho, Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz, House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray Palacios (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan), and Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan).

Sablan lauded the House for "acting timely" to be compliant with the Open Government Act of 2007 in time for today's effective date.

"We do anticipate it will take some time to adjust to it, like the 72-hour public notice of meetings but this is a good start," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

House legal counsel Joey San Nicolas reminded that the role of the House clerk is critical in making sure the Open Government Act is complied with.

Besides the 72-hour public notice requirements, other changes to the rule involve public comments, and record keeping.

An official meeting is one

See HOUSE on Page 4

Calvo sentencing today

Convicted sex offender Patrick Mendiola Calvo is expected to appear today before Superior Court presiding judge Robert Naraja for sentencing.

The sentencing of the 47-year-old Calvo was originally set for Nov. 30, 2009, but was moved for today, Dec. 7, at 10am.

It was not clear, however, whether another request for postponement of the sentencing was filed on Friday.

Calvo

The businessman has been under house arrest while awaiting his sentencing.

Last September, jurors found Calvo guilty of sexually abusing a 13-year-old girl in 2008. He was pronounced guilty of sexual assault in the second degree and sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree.

Naraja found Calvo guilty of sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree and disturbing the peace. The judge decided on the misdemeanor charges.

Naraja imposed many conditions for the house arrest, including a daily curfew, for Calvo to stay away from the victim and other girls under 18 years old.

In 2000 the government also filed two criminal cases against the businessman for allegedly sexually abusing two minor girls in 1997 and 1998. In one case, the jury acquitted him. In Nov. 2005, the court dismissed the second case after the Office of the Attorney General moved to drop the charges. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Munson wants Garment Workers Trust Fund closed within 1 month

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson wants the Garment Workers Trust Fund to finally shutdown its operations within a month.

In a written order issued on Friday, Munson ordered the GWTF chaired by former Superior Court associate judge Timothy H. Bellas to exercise its best efforts to close operations within 30 days.

Munson

The judge also approved GWTF's request for payment of $13,286.79 in attorney's fees and operational expenses for a three-month period ending Sept. 30, 2009.

Bellas said GWTF incurred $3,133.04 in attorney's fees and printing/copying costs for the quarter ending Sept. 30, 2009.

Bellas asked for reimbursement of travel expenses in the amount of $5,278.32 he and Trustee Cruz Reynoso incurred to attend the trustees meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Bellas and board of trustees Reynoso and Richard Guy met in Hawaii last Sept. 25 where they reviewed and discussed the almost 1,100 persons who filed applications to avail of the GWTF's hardship based assistance program.

Reynoso is a former California Supreme Court justice, while Guy is a former Washington State Supreme Court chief justice.

Bellas also requested the court to approve payment of $5,843.32 in wages and taxes for one part-time employee and other operational expenses of the GWTF.

The former Garment Oversight Board established the GWTF. GOB was set up pursuant to the $20-million settlement agreement in the class action against the garment industry. The court closed GOB in October 2008 and GWTF was formed.

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Today is deadline to vote in FSA county committee elections

HONOLULU, Hawaii—Diane Ley, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Hawaii is reminding farmers, ranchers and other eligible voters to cast their ballots in local FSA County Committee elections before today's deadline (Dec. 7, 2009).

"It is crucial that eligible farmers and ranchers take the time to vote in this election to give them a voice in how FSA programs are administered in Guam and the CNMI," said Ley.

Ballots were mailed to eligible voters earlier this month. Eligible producers who did not receive ballots should immediately contact the Guam Farm Service Agency (FSA) office at (671) 472-7547

Ballots must be returned to the Guam FSA office or postmarked no later than Dec. 7, 2009. Elections may be challenged by nominees within 15 days after the results of an election are posted. Newly elected Committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2010.

FSA Committee members play an important role in their communities by making decisions on commodity price support loans and payments; conservation and disaster programs, and other important issues.

A county committee is made up of three elected members. More than 8,000 farmers & ranchers serve as County Committee members in more than 2,300 FSA offices nationwide. This year, approximately one-third of those seats are up for election. ***(PR)***

HOUSE

From Page 2

conducted by a quorum of members present for a session or a committee meeting during which official action may be taken.

Informal conversations among lawmakers or between lawmakers and constituents are not considered official meetings subject to the Open Government Act.

Sablan's one-page resolution with 32 pages of attachment explains in detail the changes made to the House rules.

The Senate was ahead of the House in amending its rules to comply with the Open Government Act initiative. The Senate amended its rules on Nov. 19.

The Open Government or "Sunshine law" was created to err on the side of disclosure. It was created to help citizens obtain public records.

In the CNMI, Public Law 8-41 or the Open Government Act requires government agencies to conduct their meetings openly, to make public records available for inspection, and to respond to requests for information within 10 days. Government agencies can charge a reasonable fee for copying requested documents.

Exceptions are made for emergency meetings and executive sessions that are reasonably and publicly justified, and there are provisions in place to protect whistleblowers and certain personal records.

On July 4, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Freedom of Information Act into law. It went into effect the following year. The Act applies only to federal agencies. However, all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and some of the territories have similar laws.

CENSUS

From Page 1

A Census enumerator would be paid $15.94 an hour. Other positions will be paid anywhere between $12.50 and $25 an hour.

The rates for Census' part-time and full-time jobs are way above the CNMI's current minimum wage of $4.55 an hour, drawing the interest of community members who have to grapple with financial difficulties.

Asperin, a commis chef at Hyatt Regency Saipan, was one of the hundreds of people who took part in the 2010 Census job fair held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe from 11am to 4pm. He arrived early at the job fair, at around 10:30am, and was among the first batch of examiners.

"Our work hours have been cut from 40 hours to 32 hours. It will help me if I get the Census job. If I don't pass the exam and don't get the Census job, I will just charge it to experience. It's been a long time I've taken any kind of exam," Asperin said.

Juan Borja, local office manager for the 2010 CNMI Census, said in only the first hour of the job fair, they already received some 300 application forms.

"We prepared at least 1,000 application forms. We don't want to fall short. We anticipated this much people. There are lots of activities going on the island today that's why the 11am to 4pm schedule for the job fair will give people an opportunity to also attend events before or after going to other community events," he said.

Every 50 people to arrive and turn in their filled out application form to Census officials and employees were taken to the Multi-Purpose Center to take the exam which lasted from 30 to 45 minutes.

Borja said the exam gauges each applicant's reading comprehension, organizational skills, mathematical skills, map reading and ability to follow instructions, among other things.

Another applicant among the second batch of examinees on Saturday morning said she had difficulty answering the questions in the examination.

'Difficult'

"It's too difficult for me. I now leave it up to God if I pass or fail," said the applicant, a 34-year-old nonresident worker who asked her name to be withheld for fear her employer may scold her for applying for a part-time job with Census.

The applicant, who has been a nonresident worker on Saipan for 11 years, said she is still earning minimum wage.

She said she filled up an application form prior to the job fair.

Borja said results of the exam will be known this week. He said every person who took the exam would receive a phone call from the local Census office about the result of the exam—whether they passed or failed.

If applicants passed the exam, they would still need to pass an individual interview, the schedule for which will be given to them when they receive a phone call about the result of their exam.

More Census job fairs

Saturday's job fair was only the first of a series of job fairs to be held by the local Census office to fill up over 350 part-time and full-time positions.

Among the positions needed and the rates offered include: clerks, $12.50 an hour; enumerators, $15.94; crew leader assistants, $15.94; crew leaders, $17.19; quality check crew leaders, $17.19; field operations supervisors, $18.75; quality check supervisors, $18.75; and interpreters, $25 an hour.

Today, from 5pm to 8pm, another job fair will be held in the cafeteria of Saipan Southern High School in Koblerville.

On Wednesday, Dec. 9, the job fair will be in the cafeteria of ChaCha Oceanview Junior High School in Kagman, from 5pm to 8 pm.

The last job fair will be on Thursday, Dec. 10, from 5pm to 8pm, in Tanapag Elementary School's cafeteria in Tanapag.

Borja said they will complete all the job fairs even when the number of exam passers during the first few job fairs already exceeded 350.

"Like I said earlier, some who will pass the exam and the interview may back out for one reason or another. We don't want to fall short of our target workers so it's better to have a pool of eligible applicants," he added.

Borja reiterated that the Census 2010 is a "historic undertaking" that has gotten people involved, including former press secretary Charles Reyes Jr., former director of the CNMI Department of Commerce's Central Statistics Division John Blanco, and former House of Representatives member and Labor deputy secretary Andrew S. Salas who are all employed now as assistant managers at the local census office.

Kathryn Barry, former marketing manager for IT&E, is now the 2010 CNMI Census media specialist.

The Census began in 1790 and was written into the U.S. Constitution. Article 1, Section 2, requires that everyone in the United States is counted every 10 years.

In the CNMI, the first census was conducted in 1950, not too long after World War II. The CNMI will thus mark the 60th anniversary of the census locally in 2010.

Census data are used to distribute congressional seats to states, to distribute more than $400 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year, and to make decisions about what community services to provide.

The actual census date will not start until April 1, 2010, but some positions will begin working in early January, although the majority will begin in mid-March.

Training for the Census jobs may begin as early as January, said Borja. He added that training hours are also paid the same rate offered for all the positions.

For more information about requirements and qualifications, call the Local Census Office at 288-3027/23, or log on to the CNMI Department of Commerce Web site and click on the Census 2010 link.

WINNER

From Page 1

Based on unofficial and partial result released on Nov. 23, Covenant Party standard bearer Benigno Fitial and his running mate Eloy Inos enjoy a 501-vote advantage against the Republican Party tandem of Heinz Hofschneider and Arnold Palacios.

There were over 1,800 absentee ballots sent during the runoff election of which only 665 were counted last Nov. 23. This represents only 25 percent of the total absentee voters.

Commonwealth Election Commission Executive Director Robert Guerrero yesterday told *Saipan Tribune* that results of the counting of absentee ballots will be known at 6pm at the latest tonight.

Pursuant to law, absentee ballots for the runoff poll is slated for pick up at 12 noon today, Dec. 7.

"We will pick the absentee ballots as required by law 12 noon today and then we will process them. Counting will start as soon as we finished the processing for absentee ballots," he said, adding that it would probably take about two hours to process the absentee ballots.

Guerrero said the commission is targeting to start the procedure by 3pm to be held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Tabulating and counting will still be done manually, according to the executive director.

Asked on the estimated absentee ballots already sent at the post office, Guerrero said they have no idea.

"We will only know the exact figure or estimate when we pick them up and process," he said, adding that the commission will follow the same procedure during the general and runoff election.

Due to the short period of time mandated by the runoff law, Guerrero hinted that not many absentee voters may have sent their ballots on time.

"I don't think we're going to get much of the votes because of the time frame we have [under the runoff law]," he said.

In the general election, the commission had more than 30 days to send the absentee ballots compared to only four days permitted under the new runoff law.

"Unfortunately, that's the mandate of the law and we cannot do anything about it," he added.

The CNMI's first runoff election drew a total of 12,181 voters last Nov. 23, which translates to only 76 percent of the total number of registered voters in the Commonwealth.

There are a total of 16,108 registered voters on three islands including over 2,000 absentee voters based on the commission's website.

In the general election on Nov. 7, the commission recorded a satisfying turnout of 86 percent, which was also lower than the 93 percent that was recorded in the 2005 general election.

In the 2001 general elections, voter turnout was a comparatively dismal 78 percent.

US LABOR

From Page 1

mined it is more feasible for the Department to receive such requests directly rather than have the CNMI receive and process such requests," USDOL said.

All requests for a prevailing wage determination for a job opportunity in the CNMI made in connection with a potential filing in a labor certification program must be made in the manner described in USDOL's filing procedures.

David Gulick, district director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said last week that USDOL intended to publish its notice on the prevailing wage determination on Friday (Washington, D.C. time), which was Saturday in the CNMI.

Officials from USCIS and other component agencies of the Department of Homeland Security had said that questions about prevailing wage rates must be addressed to USDOL.

DHS officials are currently on island to help educate CNMI residents about U.S. immigration law and regulations, and oversee the federalization of CNMI immigration.

Prevailing wage is defined as the hourly wage, usual benefits and overtime, paid in the largest city in each county, to the majority of workers, laborers, and mechanics.

USDOL said the minimum monetary wages and fringe benefits to be paid are established based on what is prevailing in the locality.

A rate is determined to prevail where a single rate is paid to a majority (50 percent or more) of the workers in the same class in a particular locality.

If a single rate is not paid to the majority of workers in a locality, statistical measurements such as the median (a point in a distribution where 50 percent of the surveyed workers receive that or a higher rate and 50 percent receive a lesser rate) or the mean (average) are used to establish prevailing wage rates.

For example, in Guam, which is only about 120 miles away from the CNMI capital of Saipan, the prevailing wage rate for an accountant is $12.46 an hour or $25,917 a year to $22.70 an hour or $47,216 a year, based on data from USDOL's website.

In other U.S. states and cities, an accountant is paid more. In San Francisco, California, for example, the prevailing wage rate for an accountant is from $24.23 an hour or $50,398 a year to $44.41 an hour or $92,373 a year.

The USDOL's notice involving prevailing wage determinations in the CNMI accompanied a notice that, as of Jan. 1, 2010, the department's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) National Prevailing Wage and Helpdesk Center (NPWHC) in Washington, D.C., will receive and process prevailing wage determination requests for use in the H-1B, H-1B1 (Chile/Singapore), H-1C, H-2B, E-3 (Australia), and permanent labor certification programs.

Filing procedures

The USDOL said requestors must submit prevailing wage determination requests using the Application for Prevailing Wage Determination, Form ETA-9141.

This request must be sent to the NPWHC by U.S. Mail or comparable physical delivery service at the following address: U.S. Department of Labor-ETA, National Prevailing Wage and Helpdesk Center, Attn: PWD Request; 1341 G Street, NW., Suite 201, Washington, DC 20005-3142.

On and after Nov. 28, 2009, for the CNMI and on and after Jan. 1, 2010, the NPWHC will only process prevailing wage determination requests received by mail in hard copy.

"The Department is in the process of developing an electronic means for the submission of PWD requests and will publish a notice in the Federal Register informing the public when such a process becomes available," USDOL said.

CUC seeks dismissal of class action to recover $4.2M in refund

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has asked the Superior Court to dismiss the class action lawsuit filed by consumers against the CUC over the increase of power rates.

CUC, through counsels Alan J. Barak, Deborah E. Fisher, and Timothy Connor, cited six reasons to dismiss the case that sought damages to include a refund of roughly $4.2 million, and related punitive damages and attorney's fees.

The persons who filed the lawsuit are Garment Castro Gaskins, Milagro S. Palacios, Saipan Ice and Water Co., Inc. and Saipan Aquaculture. They named as defendants CUC and then executive director Antonio Guerrero.

The plaintiffs are seeking to recover damages the amount of money that CUC illegally charged its customers by the unlawful raise of power rates from July 22 to Oct. 24, 2006.

In a 50-page motion to dismiss, the CUC counsels said there is no case or controversy because the plaintiffs' only claimed injury is receipt of a bill.

The defendants' counsel said the court has no jurisdiction because the plaintiffs have not exhausted their administrative remedies.

The counsels said third, there's no jurisdiction because a utility refund case belongs at the utility commission.

CUC said fourth, it is not a taxpayer action because no public funds, and no misuse and no fiduciary duty to arms' length customers.

CUC said the lawsuit's cause is barred by the Government Liability Act and common law.

Finally, the utility agency counsels asserted that the voluntary utility payments cannot be recovered long after the fact.

On the injury issue, CUC counsels said the plaintiffs claims merely that they were billed, not that they paid anything to be refunded.

The counsels said the complaint also fails to specify whether the plaintiffs were electric customers at the time of the challenged fuel billing.

"Without alleging (1) injury or (2) that they were CUC's customers in 2006, plaintiffs have no standing to sue and the Court has nothing of substance to resolve," they said.

On the jurisdiction issue, the CUC counsels said the lawsuit fails to allege a critical jurisdictional prerequisite—the exhaustion of administrative remedies.

"As an action to recover utility rate payments, the complaint fails to allege that plaintiffs followed the lawful complaint regulations for CUC customers," the lawyers said.

The counsels said the court also lacks jurisdiction to hear the case because exclusive original jurisdiction for this utility refund claim lies in the CNMI regulatory agency—the CNMI Public Utilities Commission.

With respect to the elements of a taxpayer action, the CUC lawyers said a taxpayer action cannot be maintained unless public funds were improperly expended.

Here, the lawyers pointed out, the claimed refunds consist wholly of private payments from CUC's customers.

"The utility rate relationship is a contract, between customers who pay their own funds to CUC, and CUC, which provides power, water and wastewater services," the counsels said.

CUC counsels said that, even assuming a case could be maintained on other grounds, the Government Liability.

Act bars a lawsuit against CUC and its employees for merely following the law governing them at the time.

"It, and the common law, also bar plaintiffs' claim for punitive damages against the agency, particularly in the second cause's posture as a contract action," they said.

Finally, the counsels said, the voluntary payments doctrine supports dismissal.

They pointed out that plaintiffs three years ago should have challenged their bills from the company, not now, long after the fact.

The counsels said assuming that the plaintiffs paid the bills, they offer no cognizable excuse for failing to complain at the time, in contrast to Rep. Stanley Torres and Jack A. Angello.

Torres and his then staff Angello also sued CUC over the utility's billing rates. The CNMI Supreme Court a few months ago ruled that CUC overbilled Torres and Angello.

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Close to a thousand flock to ballet show

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Palms Resort Saipan played host to nearly a thousand guests during a three-night special ballet show starring local ballet students and international ballerinas.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Couple Alexy Nasadovich and Margarita Rudina from Russia perform a scene from the "Sleeping Beauty and Concert of Ballet Stars" staged by the Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts at The Palms Resort Saipan in San Roque on Friday night.

On Friday night, 60 students of Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts joined 10 visiting ballet stars in wowing a crowd of over 350 during a three-set performance that included *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

The academy's creative director Anna Glushko expressed her appreciation to people who turned out for the event, which was estimated to be close to a thousand.

On Saturday night, about a hundred guests were seen in attendance to the special fundraising cocktail show of the international ballerinas which also accorded spectators the opportunity to take pictures with the visiting stars.

Last night was the last series of the show and it was expected to bring in about 350 more guests to the hotel.

The grace and poise of international stars, colorful costumes, and the participation of the academy's children performers were among the highlights of the show.

The visiting ballerinas included Russian couple Margarita Rudina and Alexey Nasadovich who played the roles of Princess Aurora and Prince Florimund in Peter I. Tchaikovcky's "Sleeping Beauty Ballet."

Others were brother and sister Asami and Keisuke Takai of Osaka Japan; Hye Su Shin and Seung Hyun Lee of Seoul Korea; Hiromi Aoki, Midori Endo, Yukine Murakawa, and Kanako Mishiba from Tokyo, Japan.

According to Dr. G.S. Oden, Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts president, the special fundraising cocktail was even extended due to the public's request.

He described the overall turnout as "very overwhelming" and praised the community and the business sector for their outpouring of support for the academy.

Oden disclosed that their next big show will be slated for December 2010.

However, he said smaller ballet performances are expected starting early next year.

Oden also disclosed that during the fundraising show, 25 major prizes were awarded to guests of which 20 went to local students, who came with their families.

Oden said Delta Airlines and the Palms Resort Saipan, two of the event's biggest sponsors, expressed the same commitment of support to the show next year.

The other sponsors of the successful ballet show included Wells Fargo, Dr. Alan Markoff Tooth Works, Burger & Comer PC CPAs, Bank of Guam, First Hawaiian Bank, DFS Galleria, Triple J Motors, Asiana Airlines, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kendall-Jackson Wine Estate, Tan Holdings, Saipan Grand Hotel, Joeten Shopping Center, KZMI, KSPN, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Aqua Resort Club, Pacific Subsea, and publications on the island.

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MVA reaffirms tourism partnerships in Korea

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Visitors Authority deputy managing director Judy Torres, in grey, hosted Korean tourism partners of the MVA at a yearend appreciation gathered held on Nov. 19, 2009, in Busan. Attendees included airlines, travel agents, and hotels that have partnered with the MVA over the past year to attract Korean visitors to the Northern Mariana Islands.

Ties with key tourism partners in Korea were recently reaffirmed by the Marianas Visitors Authority with its annual appreciation gathering of industry representatives. Awards were also given to top tourism partners at the event, held on Nov. 18 in Seoul and on Nov. 19 in Busan.

"This gathering is our opportunity to recognize and thank our tourism partners in Korea for their work over the last year," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Despite the challenges we have faced in the past year, our partners have continued to work diligently with the Marianas Visitors Authority to bring Korean visitors to our islands. We look forward to that continued synergy in the year ahead."

An award ceremony, the highlight of the night, recognized four partners. Four awards were given in Seoul: Hana Tour, top golf tour promoter; BC Card, top MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibitions) group travel promoter; Mode Tour, best partner; and Very Good Tour, travel agent with the most growth in sales volume.

At the Busan event, 11 travel agents were awarded for increased visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands with the Busan Volume Incentive Program conducted from Sep. 20 to Nov. 5, 2009.

The gatherings, held at Millennium Seoul Hilton and Busan Paradise Hotel, were attended by Asiana Airlines, major travel agents and hotels who have contributed greatly to selling Northern Marianas' products. MVA deputy managing director Judy Torres hosted the event and presented the results of FY2009 promotion activities and the MVA's promotion plans for FY2010.

A raffle drawing was also held to thank the tourism partners. Thirteen coupons for four-night free accommodation were donated by hotels, DFS Galleria gave away $1,000 of gift certificates, the MVA provided luxury brand items, and Asiana Airlines donated two Incheon-Saipan roundtrip tickets. ***(MVA)***

Ristorante Italiano
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Mahi Mahi Escabeche

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Garlic Bread

Spaghetti Pepperoncino with Shrimp and Cucumber

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Enjoy a sumptuous Fusion Mexican Cuisine
With delicious selection wit hall you can drink
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6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Indian Night Every Thursday
Enjoy a variety of Indian Cuisines
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6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

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Minami Restaurant

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Come and enjoy East meets West
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Inclusive of Sodas & Bud Family Beers
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SHRM to hold 'new workforce era' conference

The Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter will hold a full-day conference titled "A New CNMI Workforce Era," that will feature leading local, regional, and federal officials speaking on the most critical labor issues facing the CNMI and Guam.

The conference will be held this Thursday, Dec. 10, from 7:30am to 4pm at the Hibiscus Ballroom of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

The conference is open to the public and will be an invaluable opportunity for employers and employees alike to learn all the details about the recently implemented U.S. federal regulations enforced by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and U. S. Customs and Border Protection, find out about the new role of the CNMI Department of Labor, get an update on the Guam Buildup and other regional workforce opportunities, gain knowledge about the successful H1 and H2 visa program in Guam and how it may be applied in the CNMI, find out about federal money available through the CNMI's Workforce Investment Agency that can help you develop your local workforce, and discover how to recruit talent for your organization from Northern Marianas College and the Northern Marianas Trades Institute.

The conference includes refreshments, lunch, and handouts. The cost is $45 for SHRM members and $65 for non-members. To reserve your seat, call either Denise or Penny at 323-5866 or email Eric Plinske (SHRM President Elect) at ericplinske@yahoo.com.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 individual members, the society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, the society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy.

Human resource and management professionals who are not members of SHRM are encouraged to join. Applications can be obtained at the meeting or by contacting Frannie T. Salas, membership chair, at francestsalas@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Saipan Tribune Make it your DAILY habit.

SHRM SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
CNMI Chapter

Presents

A New CNMI Workforce Era

Thursday, December 10, 2009
Fiesta Resort & Spa – Hibiscus Ballroom
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

AGENDA

7:30 – 8:15 am	**Registration & Continental Breakfast**
8:15 – 8:30 am	**Welcoming Remarks** **Marlene Cruz**, SHRM CNMI Chapter President
8:30 – 9:45 am	**Update from the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS)** **David Gulick**, District Director – Honolulu U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services
9:45 – 10:00 am	**Break**
10:00 – 11:15 am	**Update from the U. S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** **Bruce Murley**, Area Port Director – Honolulu **Gerald Aevermann**, Acting Port Director – Saipan U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs & Border Protection
11:15 – 12:00 pm	**The New Role of the CNMI Department of Labor** **Cinta M. Kaipat**, Deputy Secretary CNMI Department of Labor
12:00 – 1:30 pm	**Lunch** **Update on the Guam Buildup and Regional Workforce Opportunities** **Maria Connelley**, Director Guam Department of Labor **The Successful Guam H1 & H2 Visa Program** **Greg Massey**, Administrator Guam Department of Labor, Alien Labor Processing & Certification Division
1:30 – 2:15 pm	**Workforce Investment Agency Funding Available to Develop Your Workforce** **Barbara Santos Van Meter**, Acting Director CNMI Workforce Investment Agency
2:15 – 3:00 pm	**Recruiting Talent from Northern Marianas College (NMC)** **Dr. Carmen Fernandez**, President **Heather Santos**, Career Services Manager Northern Marianas College
3:00 – 3:45 pm	**Recruiting Talent from the Northern Marianas Trades Institute (NMTI)** **Anthony Pellegrino**, President Northern Marianas Trades Institute
3:45 – 4:00 pm	**Closing Remarks** **Eric Plinske**, SHRM CNMI Chapter President-Elect

$45 SHRM members **$65** SHRM nonmembers

Seats are limited, sign up now!

For reservations please call 323-5866 ask for Penny or Denise

For registration, email ericplinske@yahoo.com

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 7, 1998

Deficit casts gloom

The cash-strapped government could plunge into its worst financial trouble in history as Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio predicted Friday the Northern Marianas' deficit to reach over $53 million in Fiscal 1998. But independent estimates showed that the figure could swell to an all-time high of $100 million, almost double than that of the previous fiscal year. The governor told reporters in an interview that the multi-million dollars in unpaid accounts left by his predecessor and money spent to settle tax rebates paid for the previous tax year have combined to push the deficit to an unprecedented high.

CNMI urged to look into cruise ship business

A Hawaii-based planning consultancy firm has urged the Commonwealth Ports Authority to conduct a marketing study of the cruise chip industry so that it can cash in on the growing popularity of cruises in Hawaii. The study would help the ports authority in assessing the potential of the cruise ship industry in the CNMI and develop a proactive marketing and facilities improvement program reflective of the potential of the market. According to Edward Z. Pskowski, vice president of Leo A. Daly, a planning firm, the cruise ship industry is growing at some 7.9 percent per annum over the last 10 years while worldwide tourism is increasing approximately at 3 percent per annum.

Dec. 7, 1999

Teno: NMI's participation in tourism fair a success

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday considered CNMI's participation in a tourism and travel fair in Japan "successful" as he appealed to several Japanese tour operators to help the government entice travelers to the island. He said he had met with travel agents and key officials in Tokyo during the week-long event organized by Japan Association of Travel Agents or JATA to personally ask their assistance. Attended by over a hundred countries and considered the largest gathering of Japan's travel industry, the fair allowed the CNMI to join Guam and other Micronesian islands in promoting the region's tourism industry.

Construction of new high schools to start in May

Education officials hope to begin construction of two new high schools on Saipan by May next year as their architectural and engineering design will be drawn up immediately after the proposal is approved this week. The committee on capital improvement projects of the Board of Education yesterday approved two resolutions to be presented in a meeting on Thursday that will outline the plan to build each of the school in Koblerville and Kagman. BOE member Tony Pellegrino, chair of the CIP committee, said the board will meet within the next few days with an engineering firm to start the design work for the schools.

Dec. 7, 2000

Agencies reminded: Austerity still in effect

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has reminded all CNMI government agencies that cost-cutting measures implemented in financial year 1998 remain in effect as he asked officials to ensure that their offices continue to strictly practice austerity. Mr. Tenorio, in issuing the memorandum to all government offices last month, pointed out the need to continue slashing expenditures to reflect the decline in the overall amount of revenues expected to be generated. The governor said delivery of essential government services like education, public health and safety, should not be disrupted by declining revenues especially when there are available effective ways to reduce the cost of government operations.

DPH urged to craft tsunami evacuation plan

There is a need for the Department of Public Health to develop concrete plans on the evacuation of hospital patients in case the Emergency Management Office once again sounds the tsunami alert on Saipan. A resolution passed by the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council noted the importance of ensuring safety of Commonwealth Health Center patients should there be a need to evacuate them during times of emergency as last month's tsunami warning. According to the resolution signed by Council Chair Gregorio Deleon Guerrero, a comprehensive evacuation plan of patients is necessitated by the fact that the government-owned hospital is located within the low-lying and coastal area.

Guam submarine fleet sets homeport changes

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii—Commander Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Rear Adm. Douglas McAneny said Wednesday that the submarine tender USS *Emory S. Land* and the fast-attack submarines USS *City of Corpus Christi* and USS *Oklahoma City* will be changing homeports during 2010 and 2011.

USS *Emory S. Land*, currently completing depot-level maintenance in Bremerton, WA, will be forward-deployed to Diego Garcia upon completion of maintenance, in accordance with defense agreements between the U.S. and British governments. USS *Emory S. Land* is expected to depart Bremerton next spring, arriving in Diego Garcia next summer.

The submarine tender will provide an expeditionary maintenance capability to the fast-attack submarines and guided missile submarines, particularly those operating in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of responsibility.

"Forward-deploying USS Emory S. Land to Diego Garcia will dramatically reduce transit time for our submarines operating in 5th Fleet that require intermediate level maintenance, emergent repair, or logistics support," said McAneny.

Assigning USS *Emory S. Land* to Diego Garcia demonstrates the Navy's continuing commitment to peace and regional security through maintaining strong capabilities.

USS *City of Corpus Christi*, currently homeported in Guam, will be replaced in Guam by the Norfolk-based USS *Oklahoma City*, and the former will be assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor. While specific dates are unavailable, the homeport shifts are projected to take place between the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011.

"Shifting homeports for USS *Oklahoma City* and USS *City of Corpus Christi* ensure that our most technologically advanced submarines are forward, so we maintain our ability to dominate the sea base and shape potential adversaries," said McAneny.

City of Corpus Christi will undergo maintenance at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard shortly after arrival.

The shift of homeports for the two submarines is not part of the overall military buildup in Guam. While there may be some period of overlap where more than three submarines are assigned, this homeport shift will not result in any long-term increase in the number of submarines homeported at Submarine Squadron Fifteen, which also includes USS *Houston* and USS *Buffalo*.

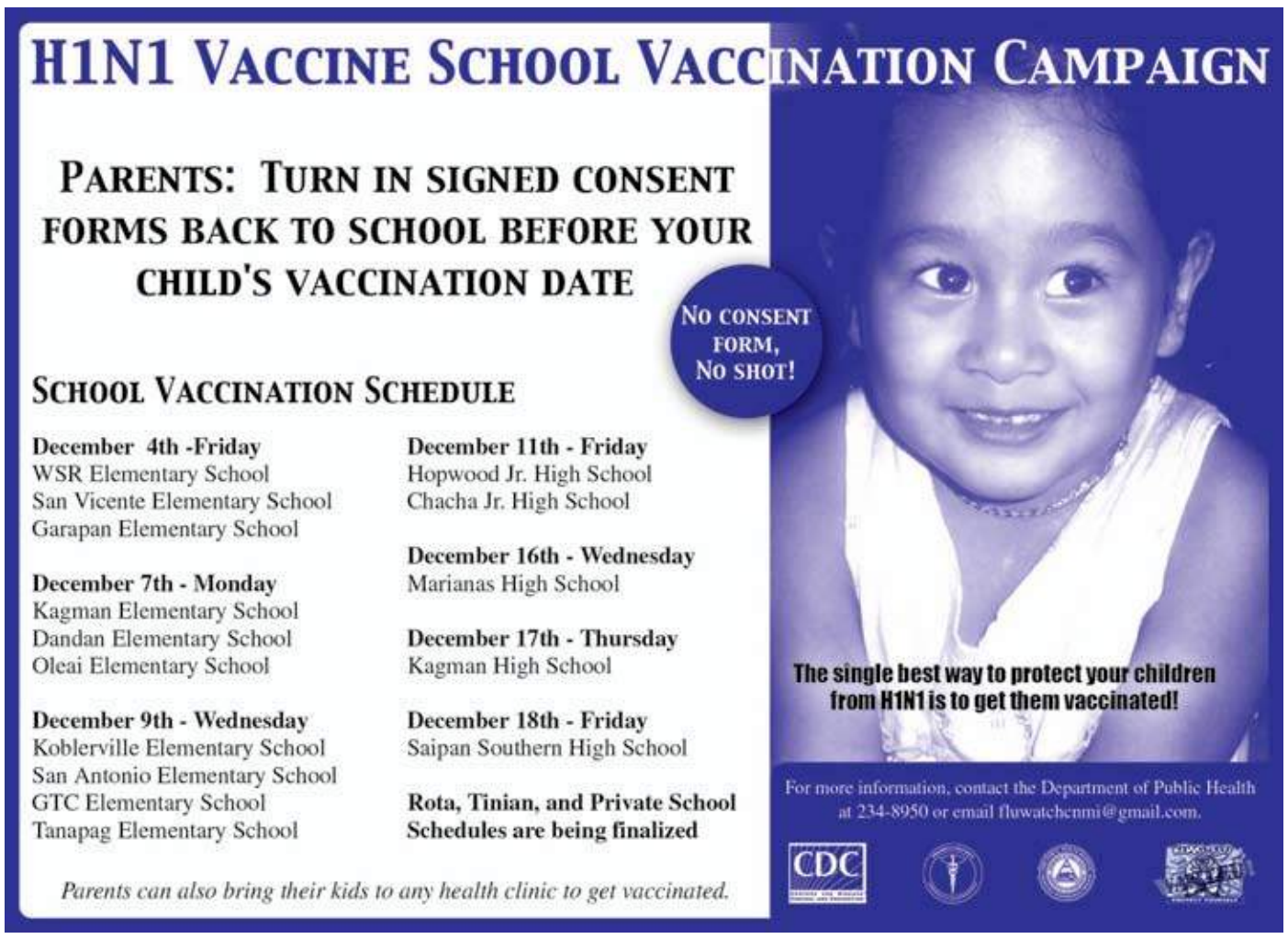
Officially recognizing the importance of the Asia-Pacific region and the increased threat posed by the proliferation of submarines in the Pacific, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review mandated that 60 percent of the U.S. Navy's submarines be home ported in the Pacific by the end of 2010.

In accordance with that mandate, USS *Hampton*, USS *Jacksonville*, USS *Seawolf*, USS *Connecticut*, USS *Albuquerque*, USS *Hawaii*, and USS *Texas* have already been transferred from the Atlantic to the Pacific Submarine Force. Currently, 31 of the U.S. Navy's 53 fast attack submarines are home ported in the Pacific, with 18 of those 31 home ported in Pearl Harbor. USS *Los Angeles* will depart Pearl Harbor for inactivation this winter. ***(COMSUBPAC Public Affairs)***

GCA presents 'A Christmas Carol, Revisited'

Grace Christian Academy will present their annual Christmas production this coming Friday, Dec. 11, 2009 at 6pm in the Grace Christian Academy auditorium.

Admission is free and the general public is invited to watch. *A Christmas Carol, Revisited* is about Tiny Tim who is all grown up and there are three ghosts who visits him, The Ghost of Christmas past, present, and future. ***(PR)***


H1N1 VACCINE SCHOOL VACCINATION CAMPAIGN
PARENTS: TURN IN SIGNED CONSENT FORMS BACK TO SCHOOL BEFORE YOUR CHILD'S VACCINATION DATE
NO CONSENT FORM, NO SHOT!
SCHOOL VACCINATION SCHEDULE
December 4th -Friday
WSR Elementary School
San Vicente Elementary School
Garapan Elementary School
December 7th - Monday
Kagman Elementary School
Dandan Elementary School
Oleai Elementary School
December 9th - Wednesday
Koblerville Elementary School
San Antonio Elementary School
GTC Elementary School
Tanapag Elementary School
December 11th - Friday
Hopwood Jr. High School
Chacha Jr. High School
December 16th - Wednesday
Marianas High School
December 17th - Thursday
Kagman High School
December 18th - Friday
Saipan Southern High School
Rota, Tinian, and Private School Schedules are being finalized
Parents can also bring their kids to any health clinic to get vaccinated.
The single best way to protect your children from H1N1 is to get them vaccinated!
For more information, contact the Department of Public Health at 234-8950 or email fluwatchcnmi@gmail.com.
CDC

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICE
Second Floor, Afetna Square Building, San Antonio, P.O. Box 10007, Saipan MP 96950

NOTICE ON BOND CLAIMS
2009 ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICE AWARDS AND SETTLEMENTS

December 7, 2009, first notice
December 8, 2009, second notice

COMPLAINANTS WHOSE ADMINISTRATIVE AWARDS HAVE NOT BEEN PAID:

Any complainant who was awarded money damages in an administrative order or settlement in **2009** in a labor case or a consolidated agency case who has not been paid in full on that claim should register with the Labor Department. Please come to the Complaint Intake Section, **Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 11:30 am,** and fill out a declaration affirming that payment has not been made. Please bring a copy of the administrative order in your case and your work permit card. A complainant who has not been paid has **until December 30, 2009** to report to the Complaint Intake Section.

After your claim is filed, the Department will determine if it is covered by a bond. Not all awards in labor cases or consolidated agency cases are covered by bonds. Some awards are only partially covered because the terms of most labor bonds are limited to three months' wages and a set amount for medical expenses or repatriation tickets. The terms of labor bonds assume that foreign workers will file their claims promptly and will not let wage claims of more than three months accumulate. Some awards are not covered by a labor bond at all because the employment was illegal and the employer never supplied a bond. However, all unpaid settlements or awards from the Hearing Office should be registered, and the Department will process all registered claims.

All claims with respect to unpaid wages and settlements **from 2008 and prior years** are now being heard and will be completed by the end of the year. When the Labor Department has exhausted its administrative remedies with respect to a claim, if any amount is still owing the claim is forwarded to the Attorney General's office for action in the courts if practicable. The notice from the Labor Department referring a claim to the Attorney General is posted on the Department's website, www.marianaslabor.com.

If you have questions about registering a bond claim, please call Renita Camacho, who is in charge of the Complaint Intake Office, at: 236-0958/7/6.

Census 2010 JOB FAIR
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Dates, Times and Locations to complete an application and be tested are as follows:

Saturday, December 5th from 11:00am – 4:00pm
at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe

Monday, December 7th from 5:00pm – 8:00pm
at Saipan Southern High School Cafeteria in Koblerville

Wednesday, December 9th from 5:00pm – 8:00pm
at Cha Cha Oceanview Junior High School Cafeteria in Kagman

Thursday, December 10th from 5:00pm – 8:00pm
at Tanapag Elementary School Cafeteria in Tanapag

Testing will take 30-45 minutes and will be offered every half hour for applicants with a completed application. Please bring a picture ID in order to complete the testing on the day of the Job Fair. Practice tests are available on the 2010 Census Website at ***http://2010.census.gov/2010censusjobs/pdf/Practice_Test.pdf.***

A police clearance is not needed to apply and will be completed prior to employment if selected, along with a mandatory drug screening. Both the police clearance and the drug screening costs will be reimbursed after hire. Other US Census employment requirements are as follows:

- **Must be at least 18 years old and a high school graduate or have a GED. Some people, however, may be hired at age 16 if they meet conditions of employment set by local laws and are high school graduates.**
- **Be a U.S. citizen (However, if not a U.S. citizen, an applicant may be considered if qualified workers are still needed as translators or enumerators with special language skills)**
- **Have a social security number before being appointed.**
- **Must submit to the FBI fingerprint screening.**
- **Pass a written test of basic skills**
- **Have a valid driver's license (for most field jobs)**

Applications can be picked up at the Local Census Office or at OPM and completed in advance of the Job Fair. Please bring the completed application to the Job Fair.

All information about job opportunities is posted on 2010 CNMI Census tab on the CNMI Department of Commerce website at http://www.commerce.gov.mp . Further information is also available by calling the Local Census Office at 288-3027/23.

Local Census Office hours are Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm and the office is located on International Terminal Loop next to the Saipan International Airport. For more information please call the Local Census Office at 288-3027/23.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The Fayyad plan

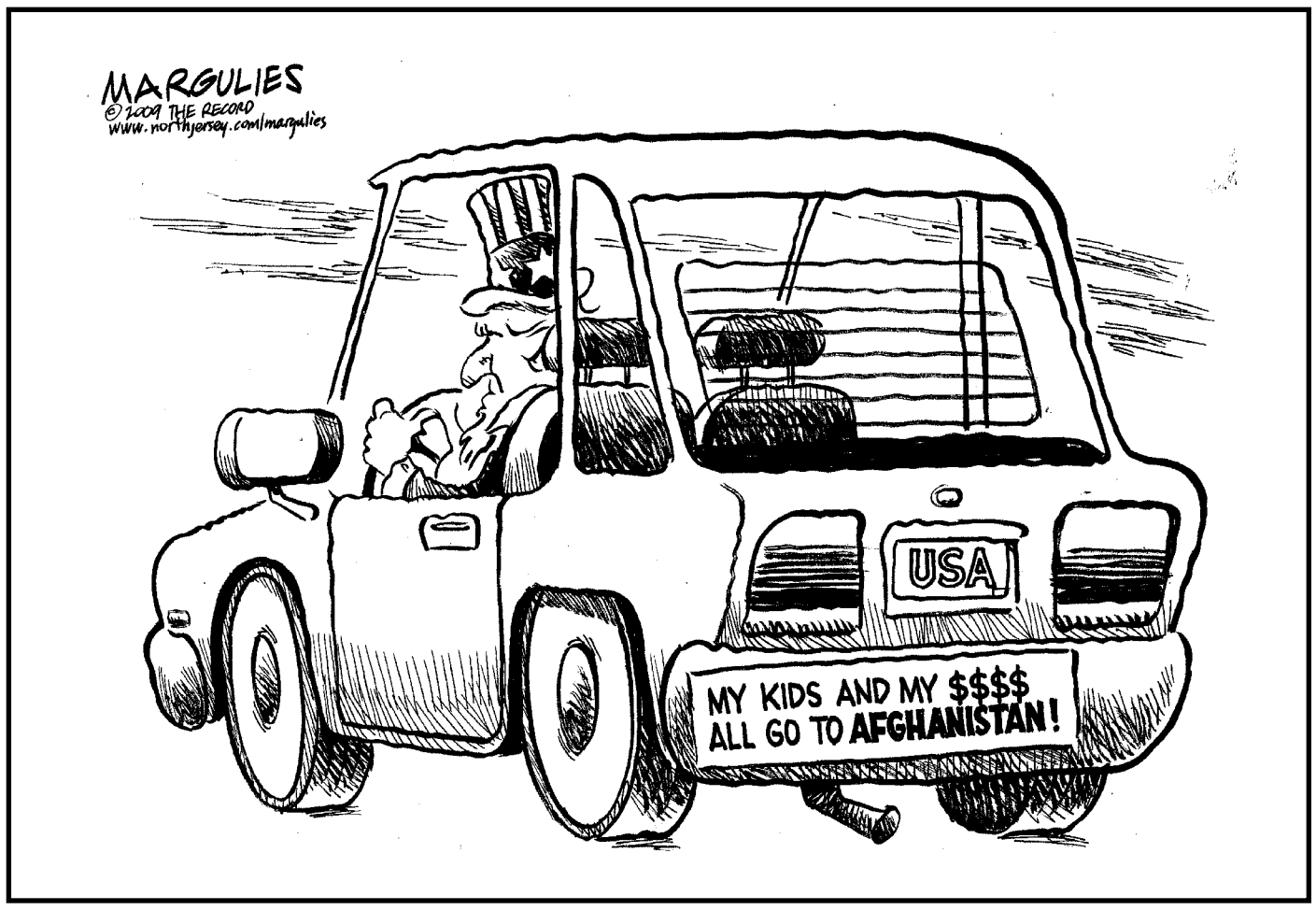
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office in March after a campaign in which he refused to support Palestinian statehood, promised an expansion of Jewish settlement in the West Bank and hinted at a new military campaign to "topple" Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Eight months later, the Israeli leader is on record as accepting a Palestinian state, is deep in negotiations with Hamas over a possible prisoner swap, and — most remarkably of all — has dispatched inspectors and security forces to the West Bank to enforce a 10-month suspension in Jewish housing construction.

You'd think all this would prompt at least light applause for Netanyahu — who through most of his political career has been known as an intransigent nationalist — and for the Obama administration, which has invested considerable effort and diplomatic capital in obtaining Israeli concessions. Instead both are being trashed in Arab and European capitals: Netanyahu for not accepting an absolute freeze on all construction outside Israel's 1967 borders, and the White House for not forcing him to do so. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas still declines to meet Netanyahu, and he is instead is threatening to resign. This is odd, because the settlement restrictions, while not exactly "unprecedented," as Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton claimed, go beyond those observed by several of the Israeli governments with which Abbas has negotiated.

Part of the problem is lingering suspicion of Netanyahu, who still appears unlikely to agree to reasonable terms for a Palestinian state. Part is the lingering effects of early missteps by the Obama administration, which demanded too much, too publicly from Israel. But the continuing impasse also reveals the underlying reluctance of either Abbas or Arab leaders to invest in a new peace process. That doesn't mean the Obama administration should give up on trying to start talks, since Middle East history shows that even unproductive negotiations are better than none. But it is a reason for the administration to escalate its support for the nation-building project being conducted by Abbas' nominal deputy, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

Breaking with a long history of Palestinian passivity, Fayyad has vowed to build the institutions of statehood from the ground up over the next two years, with or without a peace process. He has made headway in creating more professional security forces and in stimulating the economy. Thanks in part to Netanyahu's willingness to remove roadblocks and other barriers to movement, double-digit economic growth is expected in the West Bank next year. If such progress continues, the momentum for creating a new state, at least in the West Bank, could be powerful within two years. So the Obama administration should continue cajoling Abbas — but design its strategy around Fayyad.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post



An open letter to our new governor

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Sincere congratulations for having been elected our governor of the CNMI. You have worked hard to win the confidence and trust of us. You know full well the many problems we face and understand the economic depression we are in. As you campaigned you heard our despondent voices and read the disappointment on our faces because of the economic situation we are in.

Now that you have become our leader, I wish to offer some unsolicited thoughts to you, sir. Please take then in good grace as they come from many observers, not only me. Hopefully they will assist you in uniting our community as we strive to become prosperous again. Now more than ever we need you to show us the way and to firmly lead us.

My first thought is that you work to unite closer the mixture of all the people living in our country. We need you to solidify and to blend the various nationalities and cultures that grace our nation. We are a combination of various groups of people ranging from Chamorro, Carolinian, other Pacific islands, U.S. born residents, and foreigners, all living together as in a melting pot.

Your reflections on this situation will greatly influence whether we live in tranquility or not. Your actions and words will create a field of cooperative efforts. The more united we become the stronger our economy and our lives prosper. A united country can overcome any obstacles. But we need a strong leader like you to guide us.

A second thought is: please be careful in selecting your cabinet and agency heads**.** Select carefully and wisely. Please consider carefully each one's qualifications and experience for the responsibility you will be bestowing upon him. While it is true that many of your potential appointees worked hard in getting you elected, regardless, they must possess the experience and the competency to be a cabinet secretary or head of an agency. To award anyone who has not had the experience to run an important position as cabinet or agency head will only drag you down. Remember your performance will only be as good as the people you surround yourself with. Past history has shown what incompetent men in powerful positions can so.

Since you want to help the people and create a higher economic base, then you must seek out the most qualified people. Even though it means going outside the party, you must do it. Relatives and friends must not come before the welfare of the country. I realize the ramifications this could result in. But which comes firs—the country or the good ole boys? Only dedicated and competent people under your leadership will bring the desired results. Please select carefully only the most qualified persons.

An after-thought is after selecting the right person for the right job, monitor that individual carefully. Make sure he/she creates a plan of action and can defend it. Make him/her responsible for the implementation of that plan. Many times department heads have no direction. As a result the whole department is ineffective and unproductive. As we have so often seen, a person is only as effective as his accountability. Have them create a plan and then work the plan.

One of the most important things you must do upon taking office is to begin training our citizens to become productive workers. Too many of us have been demoralized by the endless influx of non-resident workers over the years. The over-abundance of non-resident workers has caused a blight on our nation. We need to become the workforce of our community. We desperately need a skilled and motivated workforce.

The system has discouraged many of our citizens from learning a profession or a trade. As a result many of our intelligent young people have not returned home after schooling. Many more of our citizens struggle to find and keep government employment as a safe haven. Ever wonder why so many of our citizens end up on welfare and unskilled? It is time to change that. The strength of a nation is only as strong as its skilled workforce.

Under your guidance you must insist that we become workers skilled in various trades and professions. You must insist and create opportunities to develop an educated populace willing to assume any and all roles in the workplace. Blue collar trades people must be placed on the same level as white collar employees and paid accordingly. Private employees must be paid on the same level as government workers. The two workplaces must become compatible. We have the people to do the work but we need you, Governor, to motivate us.

Investors are always welcome but the workforce must be a local one. There is no better way to build a nation's sustainable economy than with educated citizens capable of running their own country. As governor you can do much to motivate us. Your examples and strong encouragement will motivate us to succeed. Lead us forward; do not push from behind. Involve yourself in this transformation. Show us the benefits we can reap from your leadership and sense of direction.

Remember being a governor means that we, the people, have placed our trust in you. Regardless who financed you or helped you in your campaign, your obligations and duties must always be to the people. Do not show favoritism to any family or group. Do not smear your character with innuendos. Remember this is a small community with many eyes and ears. It takes a lifetime to build character, but a single and careless momentary act can shower a lifetime of shame on you and on us.

At all times be truthful with us. Be firm but be just. Don't hide your actions. Be transparent. Tell us what you and your administra-

See AN OPEN on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Obama's Afghanistan strategy hard to swallow

By COLBERT I. KING
Special to The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—The slurping sound you may have heard after President Obama's speech at West Point was yours truly once again demonstrating his trust in a leader by drinking the Kool-Aid. This time, however, I didn't chug-a-lug as I did after then-Secretary of State Colin Powell's Feb. 5, 2003, presentation to the U.N. Security Council on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

I swallowed every drop back then because I thought it inconceivable that Powell, one of the country's most respected public officials, a former top military commander tempered by Vietnam experience and sensitive to the importance of personal credibility, would present to the world a case on weapons of mass destruction that could prove to be bogus. But it happened.

Sobered by that experience, I stopped short of going bottoms-up with Obama on Tuesday night.

I did sample the White House Kool-Aid, though, because—here I go again—it is inconceivable to me that Obama, a cautious, thoughtful leader who presciently opposed the Iraq war, would, after months of painstaking review of the situation in Afghanistan, decide on a course that leads America to military, financial and political disaster.

Still, this time I left a lot of Kool-Aid in my glass. Minutes after Obama's speech it was clear to me that there's nothing like the feel of watching him deliver it.

Gone were the grand auditorium, the uniformed cadets, the military brass and Cabinet members. Gone, too, the applause.

Left behind were reality without rhetoric and the message of the night: not to worry. "After 18 months," declared Obama, "our troops will begin to come home."

Hence the halt in my Kool-Aid consumption.

The Obama administration would have us believe that in all of a year and a half, tens of thousands of U.S. troops will be mobilized and sent to Afghanistan, where they will join other forces and in that time deny al-Qaida a haven, reverse the Taliban's momentum and reduce its ability to overthrow the Afghanistan government, strengthen the capacity of Afghan security forces so they can fend for themselves and stabilize neighboring Pakistan.

All in the time it takes a newborn to become a toddler.

I never made it above the rank of first lieutenant in the Army, and even then I was commissioned in the Adjutant General's Corps. A seasoned warrior I was not.

Still, I am hard-pressed to understand why al-Qaida, a slaughtering group of extremists, and that brazenly ruthless movement called the Taliban would stick around for the next 18 months, making themselves a vastly outnumbered, living sacrifice to U.S. and allied forces, when all they seemingly have to do is hide out until we're supposed to leave?

I'm equally mystified how, in that same time frame, we are going to bring agriculture to the poppy fields; get tens of thousands of Afghans into the fight on our side; and convert Afghan ministries, governors and local chieftains into symbols of corruption-free zones.

But then, I'm not a general—or a member of Obama's war council, privy to inside information.

Getting nuclear-armed Pakistan to stay in the hunt for terrorist havens on both sides of its border is an even greater challenge that Obama aims to pin down by 2011.

Winning the hearts and minds of Pakistanis isn't my strong suit; so, every good wish, Mr. President.

Still, I might have consumed a bit more Kool-Aid were it not for the haunting feeling that the rest of the world is willing to hold our coat while we do the fighting.

Obama told the cadets at West Point that we are joined in Afghanistan by a "broad coalition of 43 nations." Those countries, he rightly noted, have as much at stake as the United States does in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan—"the epicenter of violent extremism," Obama called it. But have our allies been pulling their weight?

Currently, 68,000 Americans bear the burden of this war, with 30,000 more U.S. souls on the way. Contrast those numbers with the 38,000 troops contributed by 43 other countries. This week, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said "at least 25 countries" have pledged 7,000 additional troops. Hallelujah?

"What's at stake," Obama declared, "is the security of our allies and the common security of the world." When will our allies get the word?

Finally, there's the matter of sacrifice at home.

Obama defined "violent extremism" as "an enduring test" for our country. As it stands, the burden of defending our national security is essentially borne by one group of Americans: volunteers and their families. Is that fair?

The answer to that question makes the Kool-Aid even harder to swallow.

Relasion tanu yan kuttura

Ginen: JOHN S. DELROSARIO, JR.

I Attikulu Dose libianu i tautau ha upus hafa sustansiaña tanu publikun Marianas. Ayu a`anog gi san-mena i fisiku `sino buttun tanu. Ti ensegidas anog hafa gaige gi tatten ennau na tanu, sagradu na regalu ginen as guelu yan guela.

Gi hilu este siha na tanu guela yan guelu `nai ma-establese kuttura yan tradision natibu. Dumaña i tanu yan tasi gi oriyan este siha na islas gi diariu na usun probision todus. Ayu na deste antigu na komunidat natibu guine, guaha fangualuan yan peskan tasi. Gi todu atmos banda `nai maprebeniye familia yan komunida neñkanu ginen i tanu yan tasi.

I para un` atrebi hau plumachae` este na asuntu na tai relasion kulan un` kehayen mamaisa hau na ti un` tuñgu ginen manu hau magi. Egaga` ya un` seha un` ratu ya un` guadog tatte hafa hale`mu. Yangin ni mismu ennau na hinisga ti un` soda hafa tinatten mañainamu, pues buente ginen Inglatera `sino Uropa hau na tanu siha.

Deste kuatru mit antes magualue` as guelu yan guela este siha na tanu. Gi parehu tiempu, man-huhuyuñg i peskadot natibu kiñientus mit miyas man-peska guihan dañgkulu siha. Naturat este na offisiu sa` man-ginen islas si guelu yan guela. Maseha humidde na modun linala ma-usuni pot probision mantension todus.

I kustumbre dinaña oppan gi entalu tautauta siha. I lancheru hana fañagi I bisinuña kinisechan ginen i gualu parehu yan peskadot. Gi la dañkulu na dinaña linahyan, mas animu i membron komunida man-ayuda gi hafa guaha gi lanchu `sino tinala` guihan yan katne siha. Namagof na dinaña sa` motmut respetu yan inaya gi entalu tautauta siha.

Baihu repite: Gi kada isla guine mahafot te`lañg mañainata kulan guaddia petmanente gi tanu natibu deste antigu na tiempu. Ayu na esta pagu na tiempu, guaha `nai mana` fanfugu hau gi lugat siha ni trabiha ti mañgilisyayanu. Gaige ha` guihe si guelu pinipilan hau ya listu para un` inayuda gi hafa un` aliligau entre amut yan aguon haya pat fina totche.

Este mauleg ta komprende ya muñga ma-atrebi lache na hinassu gi hafa tagogosa pagu gi sagradu na tanu guela yan guelu. Este na tanu `nai man-maestablese kutturata siha. Este na tanu `nai mafañagu hau ya siempre lokue un` dia un deskasa trañkilu gi papa mapagahes paraisu. Si Yuus Maase`!

■■■

Mientras mamomokat gi kantun tasi, sige si San Agustin ha guadog silensiu hafa sustansian tres na petsona gi unu ha` na Yuus. Mediu karera mona, ha soda` un patgon gumagandu gi kantun unai. Ha guadog i patgon un` dikiki na madog ya sige ha lotgiyi hanum tasi. Finaisen as San Agustin hafa ha keke chogue. Ilegña i patgon: "Para bai` sahguan todo este na hanum tasi guine gi guinadoghu". Ha sotta si San Agustin i kuestion ya ha kontinua mamokat.

AN OPEN

From Page 10

tion are doing. The more you explain, the more we will trust you whether we agree with your decisions or not.

Mend the broken fence with the United States. We need each other. But we must be willing to be open and frank in our relations. There are both money and economic opportunities readily available if we approach the United States with sincerity. We are a member of that great family and must act as a member in good faith. There is no room for disagreement.

Solve the nagging problems CNMI has been facing for years. You can solve the CUC, the CHC, the undrinkable water and other problems. It is not lack of money. Frankly speaking, we lack a determined will to correct them.

There is no money! We don't have this or that! Always excuses—excuses! Money is always available if a strong plan is put forth and worked by dedicated men. There is an old adage: "Where there is a will there is a way!"

You have been voted into office because we believe in what you have told us you would do. Do not let excuses or incompetent cabinet and agency heads deter you. Make them produce. If they don't, replace them. We, the people, stand ready to work with you and help you solve our problems. I firmly believe the solutions are in front of us. All it takes is your leadership.

Recall how the small island of Singapore grew from a poor one and with an unskilled population to become one of the world's great economic miracles. It was done by its leadership who molded and motivated the people to excel. Can we the people of the CNMI not do the same?

The final test of your leadership will be what you leave behind.

We await your leadership and guidance. May God grant you the wisdom to make sound decisions. May He also grant you the courage to implement them. May the next five years be glorious ones for you and for us! Lead and we shall follow! Again, congratulations, governor.

Letter to the Editor

More transparency expected

The Open Government Act is now applicable to the CNMI Legislature. We know that Froilan Tenorio will be the House Speaker and we know that Paul Manglona will be the President of the Senate. These two leaders need to encourage participatory democracy by fostering improved communications with the 17th Legislature. I suggest the following::

The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate should make sure that the legislature website (www.cnmileg.gov.mp) is more informative. On this website, which should be updated at least weekly, I would like to see the plan of action to be taken by each house for the upcoming week, plus reports on past deliberations and proposed actions to be taken based on those deliberations. At present the CNMI Legislature website does little to inform the citizens concerning the issues being addressed by our legislators. All it tells us is who the players are and in what capacity they act. As a voter, I want more details. I would like to know, on a regular basis, what each legislator is doing. Perhaps each legislator should have his own website. The e-mail addresses of each legislator should be available on this site so voters can advise the lawmakers of our thoughts on the issues, especially where it concerns appropriations. We must stop spending money that we don't have. Because no legislation may be passed except at an open session, I would expect that all open sessions be video taped and available on the internet. In this way we can see the actions or inaction of each legislator.

In keeping with the governor's commitment to increased transparency, I would also like the executive branch website www.cnmigov.net to be updated at least weekly to indicate the major issues that will be addressed by the executive branch during the forthcoming week and actions taken on previous issues. I am not particularly interested in the governor's proclamations. For the reader's information, this website includes the names of the major players in the governor's various advisory groups, plus their official e-mail addresses. It also includes the names of all department directors and official e-mail addresses. A report from each department head should be included on this website on a weekly basis. I am particularly interested in the status of the planning being done to address our current critical issues, e.g. the Commonwealth Health Center; the CNMI Retirement Fund; status of court cases vs. CNMI; et. al.. We have a right to know what our Executive branch is doing.

In my research for this letter, I also visited the website of the CNMI Judiciary www.justice.gov.mp Here you can find the credentials and backgrounds of all our judges. The Superior Court has a published calendar, but it is not up-to-date. No calendar for the Supreme Court was found. There may be information on the rulings of the various judges, but I was unable to locate such during my brief visit. This website needs updating on a regular basis also. We need to know in more detail and more regularly what our Judiciary is doing.

With the advent of internet communication, the CNMI has the opportunity to establish a REAL participatory democracy. Can our elected and appointed leaders do so? I've just given my ideas on some actions to be taken. I'm sure that other astute observers can add to what I have suggested. Please visit these websites and make your suggestions for improvements by sending letters to the editor or by contacting the website directly. Improvements in these websites and frequent visitation/suggestions by our citizens will mean our government can avert crisis management and work towards a brighter future for the CNMI. Our citizenry must keep informed. We're all in this together. Participatory democracy is not easy. Like a marriage, participatory democracy requires effort on the part of all those involved. Go browse these websites now and make your suggestions!

Roger N. Ludwick
Sadog Tasi

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼78
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲88	▼79
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼79

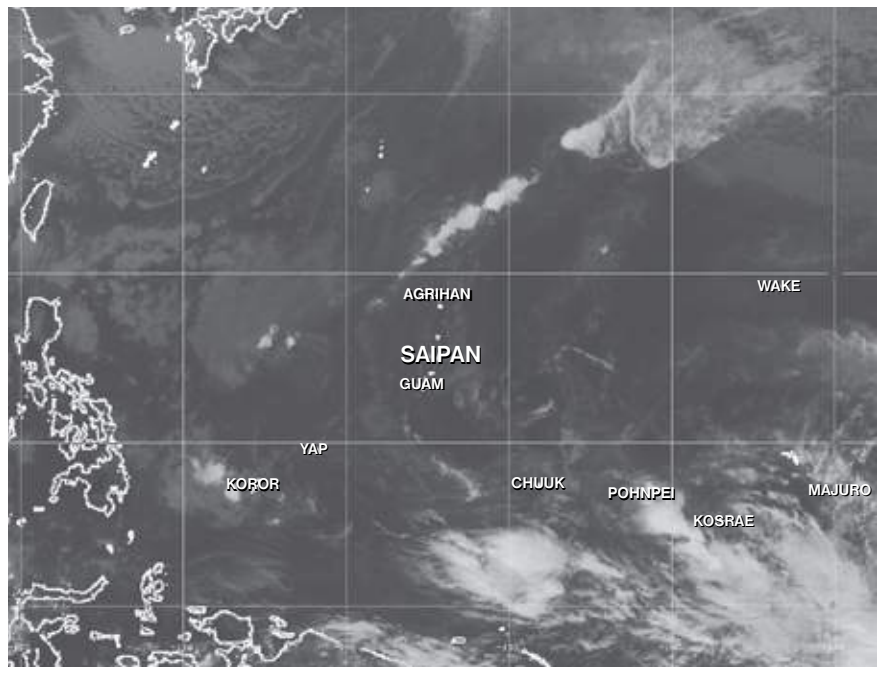
Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲69	▼60
Beijing	Cloudy	▲43	▼25
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲68	▼64
Honolulu	Showers	▲79	▼67
London	Rain	▲48	▼41
Los Angeles	Rain	▲56	▼41
Manila	Sunny	▲86	▼74
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲77	▼58
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼72
New York	Cloudy	▲44	▼33
Osaka	Cloudy	▲52	▼38
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼44
Pusan	Sunny	▲54	▼36
Rome	Cloudy	▲61	▼49
Salem	Sunny	▲34	▼18
San Francisco	Showers	▲50	▼39
Seoul	Sunny	▲43	▼30
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼35
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲46	▼33

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:12 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
12:30 PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
6:17 PM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
10:41 PM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A monsoon trough extends northeastward from 7N130E to 11N141E…Then southeastward through a weak circulation centered south of Chuuk near 6N156E to end at EQ178. Scattered showers are found southwest of Chuuk within 120 miles of a line from 5N146E to 1N155E. Farther east…Convergence south of the trough axis is generating scattered showers a few thunderstorms south of Kosrae and Majuro between 5N and the equator from 162E to 179E. A small area of scattered showers exists just west of Kosrae within 50 miles of a line from 7N160E to 6N163E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Tuesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Wednesday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Thursday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:51 PM	10:50 AM
Tuesday	11:47 PM	11:34 AM
Wednesday		12:15 AM
Thursday	12:42 PM	12:55 AM
Friday	1:36 PM	1:36 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 7, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:45am	5:35am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:30am	4:05am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:20am	2:50am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:30am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:20am	4:05am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1 via ICN	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Pacific

Former French Polynesia president back in prison

PAPEÉTE, Tahiti (Tahitipresse)—In what may be an historical judicial decision in Tahiti Wednesday, a panel of appellate judges ruled to return Sen. Gaston Flosse to prison, but allowed French businessman Hubert Haddad to remain free. Both have been indicted in an ongoing corruption investigation.

Thus, seven days after Tahiti's senior appellate judge ordered Flosse's release, the Papeete Appeals Court panel of judges ordered the 78-year-old politician returned to the Nuutania Prison where he previously had spent 16 days in custody.

What makes the decision potentially historic is that it may be the first time a politician in Tahiti with such a pedigree as Flosse's—former Tahiti president, still French senator, still Tahiti legislator, former close friend of former French President Jacques Chirac—has not only been held in prison custody but also returned to prison.

Flosse's lawyer, Papeete Atty. François Quinquis, had already anticipated the possibility that Flosse might be returned to prison. On Tuesday, he told Agence France-Presse, "I can't imagine placing Mr. Flosse in custody in the absence of any developments since his release" (from prison). Such a decision "would sorely lack in clarity or consistency", Quinquis said.

Papeete Appeals Court Judge Olivier Aimot also ordered Haddad's release from prison the same day as he ordered Flosse's release—Nov. 25. But Haddad, who has been held in prison custody since June 12, was hospitalized on Nov. 25 with a reoccurring medical problem. He was transferred from the hospital to the prison on Tuesday.

In effect, the appellate court panel of judges partially upheld an appeal from Papeete Prosecutor José Thorel, who challenged the release of Flosse and Haddad.

Flosse, who is also one of the French Polynesia Assembly's 57 representatives, was Tahiti's government president from 1984-2004 and two times briefly since 2004.

Japan FM tours Okinawa for US base talks

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's foreign minister toured the southern island of Okinawa to meet with local officials Saturday to seek a compromise over the relocation of a U.S. military base at the center of a dispute with Washington.

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada met with local government officials to hear their opinions regarding the relocation of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, a major U.S. base in the middle of a city that is to be moved to a less crowded part of Okinawa under a 2006 pact.

Okada told the mayor of Ginowan, the site of the base, that the negotiations over its relocation are "extremely tough," suggesting that a decision on whether to abide by the 2006 pact may not be made by the end of the year, as Washington had hoped.

Many Okinawans want the base closed and its functions moved off the island altogether. They say it poses a threat to the safety of the people who live near it, and have complained of base-related crime and environmental issues.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who took office in September, has expressed support for that position, although Japan's previous government agreed with the United States that a new facility would be built on Okinawa.

The issue has raised frictions within Japan's ruling coalition as well, with the junior member of the ruling bloc hinting it might withdraw its support if the base is not moved off Okinawa.

The United States has about 47,000 troops stationed in Japan under a mutual security pact. Most of bases are on Okinawa.

To lighten Okinawa's load, Tokyo and Washington have agreed to move about 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to the U.S. territory of Guam by 2014, but the U.S. military says that plan cannot move forward until Futenma's replacement facility is finalized.

Crew plans to cut rope to free Hawaii whale

HONOLULU (AP)—Marine sanctuary officials planned to return to Hawaii waters with modified equipment Friday to try to cut loose a young humpback whale entangled in several hundred meters (yards) of heavy plastic rope.

The rope runs through the animal's mouth, around its head and behind its blowhole, and is twisted in a knot.

It could kill the yearling humpback if it stays in too long, said Ed Lyman, marine mammal response manager with the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. Right now, however, the animal appears healthy.

A whale-watching cruise spotted the entangled animal Tuesday in waters off Maui. The next day, about a hundred yards of the yellow, polypropylene line came free, but several hundred yards are still attached.

Lyman's crew used a knife attached to a pole stretching out about 10 to 15 feet (3 to 5 meters) to try to cut the rope Wednesday, but couldn't reach it. Officials stayed out of the water Thursday because of windy weather and because the whale was farther offshore.

The crew planned to return Friday with a pole specially fashioned by Lyman that's more than 24 feet (7 meters) long. They're able to follow the whale's whereabouts using a tracking device that they attached to the rope Tuesday.

"If we can cut one side of the knot, then we can pull hard on the other side and try to pull it out of the whale's mouth," Lyman said Thursday.

Complicating the task is the fact that two adult whales are traveling with the juvenile. The adult whales — believed to be the juvenile's mother and the mother's escort — have been sandwiching the young whale by almost constantly swimming on either side of it.

Another difficulty is that the whale's mouth is normally submerged unless it's coming up for air.

"They come up from the nose, take that breath, clear that blowhole, and basically there's only a second or two there," Lyman said.

It's not clear where the rope came from. Lyman's guess is that it got caught in the whale's mouth when the animal was feeding in Alaskan or other northern waters. Judging by the wounds on the whale's body, it appears the rope got stuck in its mouth a month or two ago.

The whale could probably eat if it needed to, but the animals tend to fast for long periods this time of year.

About 10,000 humpback whales come to Hawaii every winter to breed and calve after spending the summer feeding in northern waters. The whales are an endangered species, though their numbers have grown in recent years.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

$1.8 million siren system stalled in Pago Pago

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa, (Samoa News)—The local Department of Homeland Security is already working on the installation of a siren alert system for American Samoa but the request to sole-source the project was returned by the Procurement Office without action. Samoa News understands that it was several weeks ago that the American Samoa's Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS) started working on getting the siren system project moving forward, which is to be funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. ASDHS director Mike Sala said sites have been identified in the territory to install poles for the system — 39 on Tutuila and six in Manu'a — with the American Samoa TeleCommunications Authority (ASTCA) as the lead agency. Sala said the total project cost is about US$1.8 million excluding labor costs.

Kiribati, Tuvalu seafarers suffer job loss

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia)—Kiribati and Tuvalu have been hit hard by job losses among their international seafarers. The latest evidence collected by the United Nations Development Program suggests 20 per cent of seafarers from Kiribati and Tuvalu have lost their jobs. David Abbot from the UNDP says the loss of revenue from seafaring is having flow-on effects for retail outlets and government tax collection and slowing the economies of the 2 countries. Kiribati's Catholic Bishop, Paul Mea, says the job losses are having a big impact on families, with some no longer being able to afford to send their children to school. In Tuvalu, there are concerns about poor nutrition among the children of unemployed seafarers.

Samoa village nixes nightclubs

APIA, Samoa (Samoa Observer)—The Ali'i ma Faipule of Vaitele do not support government's plan to relocate nightclubs to their village in Vaitele, Samoa. Pulenu'u (village mayor) Tauolo Inuvaisisi Grey said it's difficult to comprehend the logic behind government's plan. "My heart believes that this is not appropriate – Apia is the centre of the country and so it should be there that such businesses are located," he told the Samoa Observer. "Our concern is for our youths, relocating nightclubs to Vaitele would only influence our young people to absorb all the inappropriate behaviour by the many people who go out to these clubs." Tauolo said there is already one nightclub in the area. "When people come down to this place to have a night out and then leave for their homes, left behind are the Vaitele, Saina, Toamua, Vaitele- tai and Vaitele-uta, Vaiusu and Vaigaga youths who start brawls, throw stones, scream and swear," he said.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP10-EMO-023

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 04, 2010 • TIME: 2:00 P.M.

"CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE UPDATE OF THE CNMI STANDARD STATE MITIGATION PLAN FOR THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, PLANNING SECTION LOCATED ON CAPITAL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 18, 2009** AT **10:00 A.M.** AT THE EMO CONFERENCE ROOM. **QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO MS. FLORENCE S. CALVO, PLANNING SUPERVISOR VIA E-MAIL TO fscalvo@cnmiemo.gov.mp or fscalvo@gmail.com NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, DECEMBER 22, 2009.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE IT'S USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ **JOAQUIN P. OMAR**
DEPUTY SPECIAL ASSISTANT
FOR EMO/OHS

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR DONATION TO QUALIFIED CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

The Trustees of the Garment Worker Trust Fund hereby notifies all CNMI non-profit organizations engaged in health, welfare and educational work within the CNMI that it has substantial funds available for donation. Organizations requesting a donation should submit a letter which, at a minimum, verifies their charitable status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c) and describes what type of charitable activity the organization is involved in and how any funds donated to the organization would be used.

Please send all donation requests to:

Garment Worker Trust Fund
c/o: Timothy H. Bellas
P.O. Box 502845
Saipan, MP 96950

All proposals must be received no later than December 15, 2009.

/s/ GWTF Trustees: Timothy H. Bellas
Cruz Reynoso
Richard Guy

Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC, Division 9, §9910, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees/Workers' Compensation Commission/Group Health & Life Insurance Trust Fund, are hereby giving notice that the Board of Trustees will hold its ***Special*** meeting **Thursday, December 10, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **NMI Retirement Fund Conference Room, Saipan.**

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
   A. Call to Order
   B. Roll Call
   C. Adoption of Agenda
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. OLD BUSINESS
   1. MHL-Bank Pacific
   2. New Computer System Activation Report
   3. In-House Legal Counsel
   4. Emergency Regulations – Group Health Insurance Program
   5. Proposed Amendments to NMIRF Rules and Regulations – Rules 4.05, 4.06 and 7.03
   6. Proposed Amendments to NMIRF Rules and Regulations – Rule 4.02
   7. NetCare
IV. NEW BUSINESS
   1. M. White Appeal – Hearing
V. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VI. MISCELLANEOUS
   A. Announcements
   B. Next Meeting
   C. Adjournment

/s/ SIXTO K. IGISOMAR
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Business

In Tuesday speech, Obama to promote new job ideas

WASHINGTON (AP)—In his latest job creation effort, President Barack Obama is trying to find practical and politically feasible ways of spurring hiring among skittish employers.

Among the ideas expected in his economic speech Tuesday is an expanded program that gives people cash incentives to fix up their homes with energy-saving materials, senior administration officials have told The Associated Press. Obama is leaning toward new incentives for small businesses that hire new workers and new spending on roads, bridges and other public works, the officials said.

The president also is open to a federal infusion of money to cash-strapped state and local governments, considered among the quickest and most effective—though expensive—ways to stem layoffs.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the package and Obama's speech were being developed. The officials emphasized that Obama probably won't mention in his speech every job idea he will eventually support, and that his address is meant only as one step in a debate that's sure to keep going.

Obama said in his Saturday radio and Internet address that the country is emerging from an "economic storm" and that he's working to put people back on the payroll after a painful recession.

Two years of drastic job cuts all but ended in November, according to the latest figures, and the jobless rate inched down to 10 percent. Putting that in perspective, he said in the address, "For those who were laid off last month and the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs in this recession, a good trend isn't good enough."

The White House is not yet commenting publicly on the details of Obama's speech.

Job losses in the U.S. have been the worst since the 1930s, but new statistics out Friday showed a relatively moderate loss of 11,000 jobs last month. The unemployment rate dipped from 10.2 percent in October to 10 percent in November, but remains at a troubling double-digit level.

Rising frustration over joblessness threatens the president's agenda. The president must connect with voters to boost the chances of his legislative efforts and for Democrats in the 2010 midterm elections and his own in 2012.

Obama held a jobs forum at the White House on Thursday, made a trip Friday to visit business owners, workers and the unemployed in Allentown, Pa., and set the jobs-bill speech for Tuesday at Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

AP

President Obama speaks at Lehigh Carbon Community College in Allentown, Pa., Friday, Dec. 4, 2009.

Group contends popular Zhu Zhu Pets toys unsafe

ST. LOUIS (AP)—A consumer group contends one of the holiday season's must-have toys is unsafe.

But the maker of the robotic Zhu Zhu Pets hamsters defended its product Saturday against a study by San Francisco-based GoodGuide that said higher-than-allowed levels of the chemical antimony were found in the toy.

Good Guide named Zhu Zhu Pets hamsters one of the top-selling toys with low ratings after finding antimony, which can cause health problems, on the hair and nose of one of the toy hamsters, called Mr. Squiggles.

The group assigned the toy, aimed at 3- to 10-year-olds, a rating of 5.2 on a 10-point scale.

But the toy's maker, St. Louis-based Cepia LLC, insisted in a statement that its product is safe and has passed rigorous testing. The company said it was contacting GoodGuide to share its testing data and determine how the report was founded.

"I have been in the toy industry for more than 35 years, and being a father of children myself, I would never allow any substandard or unsafe product to hit the shelves," Russ Hornsby, Cepia's CEO, said in the statement.

Zhu Zhu Pets, which retail for about $10, have become this season's toy craze, following in the footsteps of Tickle Me Elmo and Cabbage Patch Kids. The items fetch $40 or more on resale Web sites like eBay and Craigslist.

That's what brought it to GoodGuide's attention. GoodGuide CEO Dara O'Rourke told The Associated Press on Saturday that his group bought three of each of the year's 30 hottest toys and tested them multiple times.

Antimony was measured at 93 parts per million in the hamster's fur and at 106 parts per million in its nose. Both readings exceed the allowable level of 60 parts per million, said O'Rourke, an associate professor of environmental science at the University of California, Berkeley.

Swedish store pulls plug on N. Korean jeans

STOCKHOLM (AP)—A Stockholm department store on Saturday removed a new line of North Korean-made designer jeans from its shelves, saying it wants to avoid courting controversy through ties with the isolated communist nation.

The PUB department store's management had not been informed that the label would be carried in its space, and pulled the plug when it became aware of it, said Rene Stephansen, the store's director.

"For us this is not a question of Noko Jeans—this is a question about a political issue that PUB doesn't want to be associated with," he said. "This is not the forum for the discussion" of North Korea.

The Noko Jeans line is the brainchild of three Swedish entrepreneurs who hoped their label would help break North Korea's isolation through increased trade with the West. The jeans come only in black, partly because blue jeans are associated with the United States and are stigmatized in North Korea.

The jeans were to be sold at Aplace, a retail space within the department store. Stephansen said he had informed the shop's owner of the decision just before the planned launch.

A spokesman for Aplace said the decision was "a bit cowardly" but said that he understood the department store's point of view.

"It's a real shame," Kalle Tollmar said. "But we will continue to sell them on our Web site and Noko Jeans will continue to sell them on theirs."

North Korea, led with absolute authority by leader Kim Jong Il, is one of the most closed countries in the world. The average North Korean is prohibited from accessing outside TV, radio or Internet, and only the elite are able to leave the country. Foreigners—and foreign goods—are largely seen as a threat by the communist regime.

Jeans have been banned in the country for years because they are considered a symbol of U.S. imperialism, said Choi Eun-suk, a professor of North Korean legal affairs at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University in Seoul.

Scientists, lawyers mull effects of home robots

PALO ALTO, Calif. (AP)—Eric Horvitz illustrates the potential dilemmas of living with robots by telling the story of how he once got stuck in an elevator at Stanford Hospital with a droid the size of a washing machine.

"I remembered thinking, `Whoa, this is scary,' as it whirled around, almost knocking me down," the Microsoft researcher recalled. "Then, I thought, `What if I were a patient?' There could be big issues here."

We're still far from the sci-fi dream of having robots whirring about and catering to our every need. But little by little, we'll be sharing more of our space with robots in the next decade, as prices drop and new technology creates specialized machines that clean up spilled milk or even provide comfort for an elderly parent.

Now scientists and legal scholars are exploring the likely effects. What happens if a robot crushes your foot, chases your cat off a ledge or smacks your baby? While experts don't expect a band of Terminators to attack or a "2001: A Space Odyssey" computer that takes control, even simpler, benign robots will have legal, social and ethical consequences.

"As we rely more and more on automated systems, we have to think of the implications. It is part of being a responsible scientist," Horvitz said.

Horvitz assembled a team of scientists this year when he was president of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence and asked them to explore the future of human-robot interactions. A report on their discussions is due next year.

For years, robots have been used outside the home. They detect bombs on the battleground, build cars in factories and deliver supplies and visit patients in hospitals.

But the past few years have seen the rise of home robots. Mainly they are used for tasks like vacuuming (think Roomba). There are also robotic lawn mowers, duct cleaners, surveillance systems and alarm clocks. There are robotic toys for entertainment, such as Furby. Robotic companions, like Paro the harbor seal, comfort the elderly. By 2015, personal robot sales in the U.S. will exceed $5 billion, more than quadrupling what they are now, according to ABI Research, which analyzes technology trends.

"You won't see Rosie from `The Jetsons,' but you're going to see more and more robots that help maintain your home. They'll pick up stuff off the floor, stock your fridge, carry stuff from the car," said Colin Angle, CEO of iRobot Corp., which makes the Roomba.

As such 'bots become more sophisticated, they could complicate questions about product liability. Ryan Calo, a fellow with Stanford's Center for Internet and Society, pointed out in a recent panel discussion at Stanford Law School that the original manufacturer might not always be liable if a robot went haywire.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Saudi oil minister: oil prices 'perfect'

CAIRO (AP)—Saudi Arabia's oil minister said current global oil prices are "perfect," as several key OPEC members indicated the group was unlikely to change output levels when it meets later this month. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which supplies roughly 35 percent of the world's crude, has held its quotas unchanged since last year's record 4.2 million barrels per day in cuts. "The price is perfect," Saudi oil minister Ali Naimi, whose country is OPEC's most influential member, told reporters. "The market is stable right now, volatility is at a minimum."

15-year-old Wis. cheddar sells for $50 per pound

MINERAL POINT, Wis. (AP)—A 15-year-old cheddar made in Wisconsin, possibly the most mature cheese for sale in the country, is selling well despite the $50-per-pound price tag, its producer said Saturday. Hook's 15-year Sharp Cheddar, produced in 1994, went up for sale in a handful of outlets on Friday and has proven popular, said cheese maker Tony Hook. "It started moving a lot faster than we expected," said Hook, 57, who—along with his wife and brother—runs Hook's Cheese Co. "People have been so excited about it."

Chevron to sell Australian gas to Tokyo Electric

SAN RAMON, Calif. (AP)—Chevron Corp. on Saturday said it has signed a deal with Tokyo Electric Power Co. to deliver liquefied natural gas for up to 20 years from the Wheatstone Project in northwestern Australia. Chevron also said TEPCO intends to acquire 15 percent of Chevron's share in the Wheatstone field licenses, and 11.25 percent of the Wheatstone natural gas processing facilities that will be built onshore near Onslow in northwestern Australia. The agreement with Chevron Australia Pty Ltd. makes TEPCO a major customer for the natural gas from Wheatstone. It calls for TEPCO to buy 4.1 million tons per year of liquefied natural gas. The capacity of the Wheatstone project's initial phase will be 8.6 million tons per year, Chevron said.

Nation

Medicare cuts focus of Senate health care debate

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Republicans forced Democrats to vote in favor of cutting billions from providers of home care for older people as partisan debate flared Saturday during a rare weekend session on President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

Obama planned to travel to Capitol Hill on Sunday to help Democrats resolve internal disputes that stand in the way of Majority Leader Harry Reid bringing the 10-year, nearly $1 trillion legislation to a vote.

Ahead of his visit, Republicans, bent on making Democrats cast politically risky votes, offered their third amendment in the debate so far showcasing more than $400 billion in cuts to projected Medicare spending that would pay for the bill, mostly for subsidies to help extend coverage to millions of uninsured.

Like the other two, this one went down to defeat, on a vote of 53 to 41. The measure by Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., would have eliminated $42 billion in cuts over 10 years to agencies that provide home health care to seniors under Medicare.

Four moderate Democrats joined all Republicans present in voting for the amendment: Sens. Jim Webb of Virginia, Evan Bayh of Indiana, Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas and Ben Nelson of Nebraska.

Underscoring the pressures on the moderates, Lincoln, who faces a difficult re-election next year, initially cast a "no" vote with the Democratic majority but switched to "yes" in the course of the 15-minute vote. Republicans accused her of flip-flopping, but Lincoln said later that she changed her vote after considering how important home health care is to Arkansas.

"That's why they give us 15 minutes," said Lincoln.

The more consequential action was taking place behind closed doors Saturday as Democrats struggled to find a compromise on a proposed government insurance plan that would compete with private insurers. Lincoln and several other moderate Democrats are opposed to the government insurance plan in the bill, and Reid, D-Nev., doesn't have a vote to spare in his 60-member caucus.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius joined in some discussions and several senators cited progress on the issue. There was discussion of various options, including nonprofit insurance plans administered by the Office of Personnel Management, which runs the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

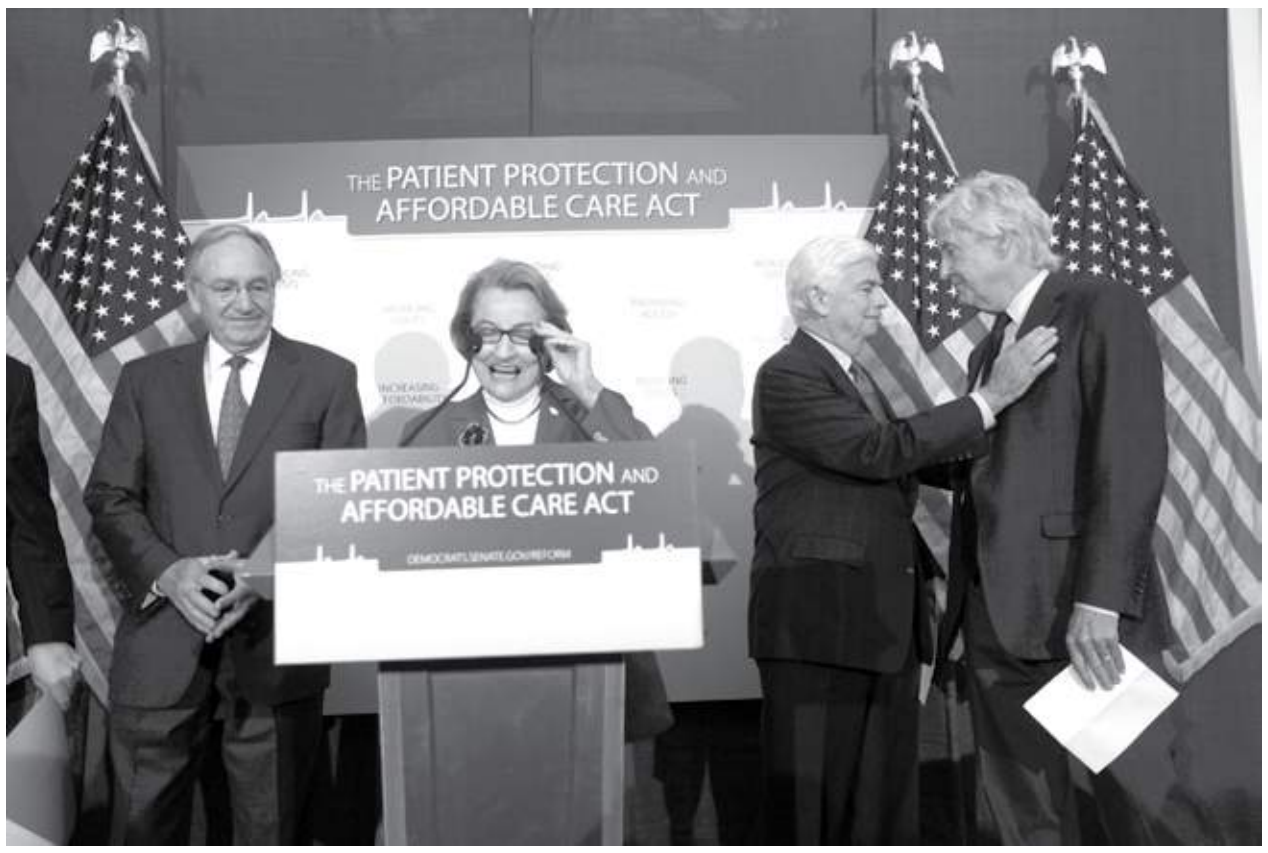
"I'm optimistic that something, I'm not sure what, but something can be arrived at," said Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La. "It's definitely going to be something that's of a nonprofit nature."

Reid called the unusual sessions as he races to finish the bill by Christmas. The weekend work also allowed him and other Democrats to highlight their commitment to Obama's signature issue, arguing that Americans can't take weekends off from worrying about health care, so the Senate shouldn't, either.

Republicans, determined to stall if they can't kill the bill, weren't impressed.

"I think the majority leader believes that somehow if we stay in on weekends the Republicans are going to blink. I assure him we're not going to blink," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

Lawmakers went at each other over who really wanted to protect older people.



AP

Former Connecticut Rep. Barbara Kennelly, president and chief executive officer of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, second from left, speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009, to discuss a Medicare amendment.

Baucus: Girlfriend merited US attorney nomination

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus defended recommending his girlfriend for appointment as Montana's U.S. attorney, saying Saturday his one-time staff member and the former state prosecutor is "highly qualified" but eventually withdrew her nomination.

Baucus said that he began dating former state office director Melodee Hanes after they were both separated from their spouses. The Montana Democrat said they did not have an affair, but began dating while she worked for him.

Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele called Saturday for a Senate Ethics Committee investigation of Baucus' actions. Steele said the panel should determine "why Senator Baucus put his personal needs above those of the people of Montana."

Baucus, who is helping lead Democratic efforts to expand health care, recommended Hanes for the federal prosecutor job in February. The senator said he appointed an independent, third-party reviewer and established "an open and fair process" that resulted in her name and two others being sent, unranked, to the White House for consideration.

Baucus said he did not know whether the reviewer—who is a long-time campaign donor to Baucus—knew about the senator's relationship with Hanes.

The reviewer is Dana Christensen, a Montana lawyer who contributed $3,400 to Baucus's political campaigns from 1989 to 2002. Christensen's role as reviewer was disclosed Saturday night by Baucus spokesman Ty Matsdorf. A phone message left at Christensen's law office was not immediately returned.

In a statement issued by his office Saturday, Baucus said that "as we grew closer and things progressed, we knew it was time to begin the process of Mel transitioning out of my Senate office."

2nd gay bishop for Episcopal Church, Anglicans

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles elected a lesbian as assistant bishop Saturday, the second openly gay bishop in the global Anglican fellowship, which is already deeply fractured over the first.

The Rev. Mary Glasspool of Baltimore needs approval from a majority of dioceses across the church before she can be consecrated as assistant bishop in the Los Angeles diocese.

Still, her victory underscored a continued Episcopal commitment to accepting same-sex relationships despite enormous pressure from other Anglicans to change their stand.

The head of the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, is scheduled to consecrate Glasspool on May 15 in Los Angeles, if the church accepts the vote.

"Any group of people who have been oppressed because of any one, isolated aspect of their persons yearns for justice and equal rights," Glasspool said in a statement, thanking the diocese for choosing her.

Glasspool was elected on a seventh ballot that included two other candidates. She won 153 clergy votes and 203 lay votes, giving her just enough to emerge as the winner.

The election began Friday with six candidates vying for two vacancies for assistant bishops.

The winner for the first vacancy was the Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce, rector of St. Clement's-By-The-Sea Episcopal Church in San Clemente. As the balloting progressed for the second vacancy, two other candidates eventually withdrew.

Blago lawyer: Cops have search warrant in theft

CHICAGO (AP)—A member of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's (blah-GOY'-uh-vich) legal team says he has been informed Chicago police have a search warrant and are looking for eight computers and a safe stolen from offices of two other lawyers in the case.

Attorney Sheldon Sorosky says he was told Saturday morning by another defense team member that police had obtained the warrant.

Police spokeswoman Laura Kubiak said she could not confirm a search warrant was executed.

Police said Friday burglars broke into the offices of Blagojevich attorney Sam Adam and his son, Samuel E. Adam, and took items that may contain information about Blagojevich's case.

Blagojevich is charged with scheming to trade or sell President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat.

ACROSS THE NATION

Wis. man wanted in double homicides eludes police

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Police sought help from the public Saturday as the search for a Wisconsin man wanted in the deaths of his two young daughters and their mothers stretched into its third day. Authorities released no new details on the slayings but continued to call 38-year-old Tyrone Adair armed and dangerous. He has strong family ties to the Madison area, but so far has eluded capture. Police have warned law enforcement agencies nationwide to watch for him. "We're just encouraging anyone who has any information at all to come forward," Madison Police Lt. Wayne Strong said.

2 men, 43 horses killed in barn fire in Ohio

LEBANON, Ohio (AP)—A fire ripped through a horse barn at a county fairgrounds Saturday in southwest Ohio, killing two men and 43 horses, authorities said. The barn roof had already collapsed by the time firefighters arrived at the Warren County Fairgrounds, about 25 miles northeast of Cincinnati, according to Capt. Krista Wyatt of the Lebanon Fire Department. The fire was reported about 5 a.m. The bodies of the men were pulled from the barn and were badly burned, said Shane Cartmill, a spokesman for the Ohio State Fire Marshal.

Student charged in Binghamton U. professor's death

VESTAL, N.Y. (AP)—A graduate student has been accused of fatally stabbing a 77-year-old Binghamton University anthropology professor. Authorities say Abdulsalam al-Zahrani (ab-DUHL'-sah-lamal-zah-RAH'-nee) was charged with murder Saturday in the death of Richard T. Antoun on Friday. Broome County District Attorney Gerald Mollen says Antoun knew al-Zahrani from school. He told The New York Times the two had known each other for "quite some time." Mollen says he didn't know whether al-Zahrani has an attorney. There was no phone listing in Binghamton for the 46-year-old Saudi national. Antoun has written several books, including "Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Movements."

Arizona man dies after parachuting from cell tower

CASA GRANDE, Ariz. (AP)—Authorities say a Tucson man has died after parachuting from a cell phone tower at night and hitting high-voltage power lines. Pinal County sheriff's Lt. Tamatha Villar says 23-year-old Darrell Dunafon and two friends broke into a cell tower site about 30 miles south of Phoenix on Friday night and were parachuting off the approximately 400-foot-tall antennae. Dunafon's parachute became tangled in nearby 12,000-volt power lines and he was shocked with a live wire. Villar says the two friends called for help, and rescue crews turned off the power and cut Dunafon down. He had a slight pulse but was pronounced dead at a hospital in the nearby town of Casa Grande.

Asia

RP declares martial law in massacre area

GENERAL SANTOS, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine president imposed martial law Saturday on a southern province where 57 people were killed in a political massacre, while security forces detained members of a powerful clan accused of plotting the attack and fomenting a rebellion.

It was the first time martial rule has been declared in the country since the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos imposed it more than three decades ago. With memories of abuses from that time still fresh in their minds, opposition politicians and human rights groups questioned President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's action, saying she overreacted to a police problem.

Government officials defended Arroyo, saying she acted decisively to bring suspects in the mass slayings into custody and head off a rebellion by the Ampatuan clan, which has ruled the impoverished Maguindanao province unopposed for years.

Clan patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr.—a former governor who was among those detained Saturday—and at least six other family members are the main suspects in the Nov. 23 attack on a political rival's convoy. Some 30 journalists were among the dead. The family has denied involvement.

The Ampatuans, notorious for running a large private army, were allied with Arroyo and helped her receive crucial votes from the volatile southern region during 2004 elections. Arroyo's ruling party expelled the clan after the massacre.

The martial law proclamation allows troops to make arrests without court warrants and to restore order, Arroyo's top Cabinet member, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, announced on national television early Saturday.

The last Philippine leader to declare martial law was Marcos, whose nationwide declaration in 1972 paved the way for his one-man rule that ended with his ouster in 1986.

Under the post-Marcos constitution, Arroyo can enforce martial law for 60 days, unless Congress revokes or extends it.

Former President Fidel Ramos, who was a supporter of Arroyo but has recently been critical of her actions, described her move as "overkill."

AP

Soldiers take a break as they stand in front of their armored personnel carrier at the gate of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009 in Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao province in southern Philippines.

US troop buildup is big; Afghan buildup is key

KABUL (AP)—President Barack Obama has his troop surge. Afghanistan's beleaguered security forces have theirs.

While the new U.S. war strategy was unveiled with worldwide fanfare, Afghan's defense force has been quietly planning its own troop buildup to break the Taliban's tightening grip on swathes of the nation. The Afghan surge is the one to watch because the success of Obama's new war plan is inextricably hinged to Afghanistan's ability to recruit, train and retain security forces that can eventually take the lead in defending the nation.

Afghan Defense Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday that he's already assigned one brigade to a new three-brigade seventh corps of the Afghan National Army. Corps 215 Maiwand is based in the Helmand capital of Lashkar Gah, where most of the 30,000 U.S. reinforcements will be deployed.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown says the Afghans have promised to send 5,000 members of the new corps to partner with British troops in Helmand. Wardak insists that will be achieved with ease. He said he's already begun staffing the command's second brigade.

Moreover, he said nearly 44 additional companies of Afghan soldiers are being added to battalions in the south and east. Another Afghan commando battalion, which will graduate in January, is also headed to Helmand—the scene of a major weekend offensive by 1,000 Marines and 150 Afghan soldiers.

"We are bringing the strength level of every unit in the south to 117 percent of its authorized strength so there will be a significant increase in the number of troops," Wardak said in his office at the Ministry of Defense.

Building up the Afghan army, plagued by inefficiency, a lack of trainers and corruption, is a precursor to a U.S. troop pullout.

Communist rebels gain strength in rural India

JAGDALPUR, India (AP)—All over the countryside in central India, red monuments topped with hammer and sickle symbols announce that this is Maoist land. And these days, nobody could forget it.

A string of recent attacks by communist rebels points to the comeback of an extreme leftist movement inspired by Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong and long seen as outdated. In response, the Indian government has announced plans to deploy more than 70,000 paramilitary and police forces, in a spring offensive that activists criticize as too little, too late.

The communists are tapping into a deep dissatisfaction over the widening gap between rich and poor, particularly in the rural areas where most people live. As breakneck development pushes parts of India far ahead of others, the richest states now have incomes five times higher than the poorest states, according to the World Bank.

"There is frustration and since there is frustration and poverty, many people join the Maoists," said tea house owner Alok Sood, sitting cross-legged on a wooden bench as customers drank sweet tea and coffee.

Sood, a 36-year-old father of two, broke down in tears as he remembered a market attack by the rebels that forced him to close his former store last year. He spent months struggling to eke out a living selling firecrackers and doing odd jobs before a local politician helped him open his roadside cafe.

Communist rebels have ambushed police, destroyed schools and abducted government officials. They blew up a key train track in Jharkand state on Nov. 19. In October, they commandeered a New Delhi-bound express train in West Bengal for several hours and ambushed a police patrol elsewhere, killing at least 17 troops.

The resurgence of the Maoists has led to nationwide soul-searching as critics blame the government for neglecting rural areas for decades, essentially cutting them off from the rapid economic growth that followed the opening of the Indian economy in the early 1990s. Analysts say the Maoists are filling a vacuum left by the failure of the world's largest democracy in vast sections of the nation of 1.2 billion people.

Ailing Thai king calls for unity on 82nd birthday

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, making his first public comments since being hospitalized, marked his 82nd birthday Saturday with a call for peace and stability in a country that has been rocked by anti-government protests.

Bhumibol

Thousands of well-wishers waving Thai flags cheered, cried and chanted "Song Phra Charoen" or "Long Live the King" as the monarch's motorcade made its way to the Grand Palace from the Bangkok hospital where he has been staying since Sept. 19.

Looking alert but tired and showing little expression, the king returned to the hospital after briefly appearing in front of members of the royal family, government officials and lawmakers.

"My happiness and prosperity will happen when the country flourishes and stabilizes," the king said, seated on a golden throne and dressed in a gold brocade robe. "The progress and stability will come true if everyone in the nation discharges their duty with all their might and puts the common interest before their own interest."

He did not mention the ongoing political crisis, which was sparked by a 2006 military coup that ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose supporters and opponents have since waged sometimes violent demonstrations. The king's brief comments—and journey to and from hospital—were broadcast live on Thai television.

Bhumibol has been on the throne for 63 years and is the world's longest-reigning monarch. While he is constitutional monarch with no formal political role, he is widely revered and regarded as the country's sole unifying figure.

Long-standing worries over the succession, combined with concerns about his heath have caused widespread unease. The palace has said the king is recovering from an inflammation of the lungs and is in no danger, but has offered scant information about his condition. The king now rarely appears in public.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Pakistani court postpones Mumbai attack trial

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The trial of seven Pakistani men accused of involvement in last year's Mumbai terrorist attacks was postponed by a week Saturday after the defense failed to appear in court as part of a daylong lawyers' strike, an attorney said. The defense lawyers stayed away as part of a work stoppage to show sympathy with victims a deadly mosque bombing the day before outside Pakistan's capital. The defendants have been charged with planning and helping carry out the three-day rampage in the Indian financial center that killed 166 people in November 2008. It was Pakistan's first indictment in the case, which is being monitored by India and the United States to see if Islamabad makes good on promises to bring those responsible to justice.

Opposition scores gains in Taiwan local elections

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's pro-independence opposition put in a strong showing in local elections, clawing its way back to respectability after two crushing defeats. With all votes counted in Saturday's elections, the opposition Democratic Progressive Party held onto its three county magistracy positions—equivalent to governorships—and won back one other from the ruling Nationalists. It also closed the gap in a number of other localities, including a traditional Nationalist stronghold in suburban Taipei. The Nationalists held onto 12 of their 14 county magistracies and mayoralties, losing one to the DPP and one to a Nationalist rebel disowned by the party because of corruption convictions.

Protesters rampage in Nepal after 3 die in clashes

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Hundreds of protesters torched vehicles and vandalized shops in western Nepal on Saturday after three people died in clashes between police and illegal forest settlers, a human rights group said, amid heightened political tensions in the Himalayan nation. Nepal's Human Rights Commission urged the government to immediately investigate the violence that erupted as police tried to remove thousands of illegal squatters in a forest in Kailali district, about 400 miles (640 kilometers) west of the capital, Katmandu, on Friday. Hundreds of policemen were mobilized to keep order in the district after the deaths sparked protests Saturday, including by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the former communist rebels, who have called for a nationwide general strike on Sunday.

World

Knox upset, tired; gets family visit in prison

PERUGIA, Italy (AP)—Amanda Knox sought comfort from visiting family members Saturday on her first day in prison since being convicted of murdering her British roommate.

The family of victim Meredith Kercher said the verdict brought a measure of justice. However, they said, it was not a time to celebrate.

Knox, a college student from Seattle, was tired and upset following the midnight verdict and sentence of 26 years in prison, according to family members and a lawyer who saw her.

"Amanda like the rest is extremely disappointed, upset about the decision," Knox's mother, Edda Mellas, said after the visit to the prison just outside Perugia. "We told her that she's gonna get out of here. It's gonna take a little longer."

Knox and Kercher's families came to this central Italian town for the verdict, which was announced at around midnight after 13 hours of deliberations. The court also convicted Knox's co-defendant and former boyfriend, Italian Raffaele Sollecito, and gave him a 25-year jail term for the murder.

Knox and Sollecito are appealing the verdicts.

AP

Amanda Knox's sister Delaney, left, and Deanna, center, next to Amanda's mother Edda Mellas enter the jail in the outskirts of Perugia, Italy, were Amanda is detained, Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

"She couldn't sleep all night," said lawyer Luciano Ghirga, who spent an hour with Knox at her jail just outside Perugia on Saturday morning. "She's worried for her parents, too, but she is keeping the faith needed for the next steps."

Ghirga said Knox was kept under strict surveillance. He denied reports that she had been put under suicide watch, which is the standard practice in such cases.

Kercher, 21, was Knox's roommate while they studied in Perugia.

Her body was found in a pool of blood with her throat slit on Nov. 2, 2007, at the apartment they shared. Prosecutors said the Leeds University student was murdered the previous night.

"Meredith still leaves a big hole in our lives and her presence is missed every time we meet up as a family," John Kercher Jr., one of her brothers, told a press conference in Perugia.

Kercher's sister, Stephanie, said the verdict "does bring a little bit of justice, for us and for her." But she added: "Life will never be the same without Mez."

The prosecutors said they were satisfied with the ruling and would not seek to appeal, even though the court did not grant their request for life imprisonment. Prosecutor Manuela Comodi said that the verdict "recognizes the defendants are guilty of all the crimes they had been charged with." In an interview with ABC News in the hours that followed the verdict, Curt Knox said he was "stunned."

Veil's spread fans Egypt's fear of hard-line Islam

CAIRO (AP)—When Egypt's government banned Islamic veils and all-encompassing robes in the dorms of public universities, it cited reports of men wearing the garb to sneak into the women's quarters.

But there was a deeper reason behind the move: an intensifying struggle between the moderate Islam championed by the state and a populace that is turning to a stricter version of the faith, whose most visible hallmark is the niqab—the dress that covers the entire female form.

The debate has grown more heated since Mohammad Tantawi, the top cleric at prestigious Al-Azhar University, banned the niqab in classrooms and dorms on the grounds that it "has nothing to do with Islam," and that it was unnecessary since the college is gender-segregated. Meanwhile, the Health Ministry and religious authorities forbade nurses and preachers to wear the niqab.

The moves have angered many women who say they cover up voluntarily out of religious conviction, and in some cases are penalized for it.

Fatma al-Assal, 22, has just earned her veterinary degree and says she has already been refused a teaching job. But she refuses to back down.

"Al-Azhar has no authority over me," she said.

Like her mother and two younger sisters, she covers everything including her hands. Dressed that way, "I feel respect. I don't have anyone looking at me," she said. "Islam says all the woman's body is a temptation."

She said she takes her example from what many Muslims believe was the dress code in the time of Muhammad, who founded their religion nearly 1,400 years ago. "I want to emulate the wives of the prophet."

In European countries, particularly France, the debate over women's dress has turned on questions of how to integrate immigrants and balance a minority's rights with secular opinion that the garb is an affront to women.

But in Egypt, the dynamic is different. Here, public conservatism is at odds with a government that is viewed not only as secular but as autocratic, corrupt and uncaring.

The debate underscores the gulf between the more secular elite that wields economic and political power, and the largely impoverished and disenfranchised masses who increasingly find solace in religion.

The split was evident last month when billboards of a swimsuited Beyonce were plastered all over Cairo to advertise the American singer's concert at Egypt's most exclusive beach resort—a concert the vast majority of Egyptians couldn't afford to attend.

Climate drama climax looks elusive in Copenhagen talks

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—For 20 years, as this crowded planet grew warmer, nations have gathered annually to try to do something about it. History now brings them to this chilly northern capital, and to a crossroads.

The world looks to Copenhagen "to witness what I believe will be an historic turning point in the fight against climate change," says Yvo de Boer, United Nations organizer of the two weeks of talks opening Monday.

It may witness, instead, history put on hold.

The change in U.S. administrations a year ago had aroused hopes the long-running climate talks might finally produce an all-encompassing package in 2009 to combat global warming and help its victims.

Too little time and too little agreement, however, especially between rich and poor countries, mean the 192-nation Copenhagen conference is likely to produce, at best, a framework—a basis for continuing talks and signing internationally binding final agreements next year.

Two key building blocks for that framework may take shape here:

■ Setting targets for controlling emissions of carbon dioxide and other global-warming gases, including by the leading contributors, China and the United States.

■ Agreeing on how much rich countries should pay for poor nations' clean energy technology and for seawalls, irrigation and other projects to counter a changing climate.

Under the grand roof of Copenhagen's modern Bella Center, delegates will also deal with a heavy agenda of other issues: the technicalities of protecting forests, measuring emissions, setting rules for "carbon credits," enforcing an eventual treaty, and other concerns.

Lax codes cited in Russia blaze that killed 107

PERM, Russia (AP)—President Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday demanded that Russia tighten its notoriously lax fire codes after the deadliest blaze since the Soviet era killed at least 107 people celebrating in a nightclub with a decorative twig ceiling and single exit.

About 130 people were injured, dozens critically, when onstage fireworks set the ceiling of the Lame Horse nightclub ablaze soon after midnight, witnesses and officials said. Many victims were trapped in a panicked crush for the exit as they attempted to escape the flames and thick black smoke.

Authorities quickly arrested two registered co-owners of the club, its managing director, and two other suspects. One other suspect was injured in the fire and remains in critical condition.

Officials said club managers had ignored repeated demands from authorities to change the interior to comply with fire safety standards. Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu told Medvedev by videoconference from Perm that the club managers violated the law by running the fireworks display that triggered the fire.

He said the club managers had been fined twice in the past for breaking fire safety regulations, which he did not specify. Russian clubs and restaurants often cover ceilings with plastic insulation and a layer of willow twigs to create a rustic look, one of many uses of combustible materials in buildings by businessmen who bribe officials to look the other way.

The Lame Horse's managers had been scheduled before the fire to report Monday on their progress fixing the flaws.

"They have neither brains, nor conscience," Medvedev said. "They must face the maximum punishment."

He declared a national day of mourning Monday.

Medvedev demanded that lawmakers draft changes to toughen the criminal punishment for failing to comply with fire safety standards.

WORLD BRIEFS

Shootouts in northern Mexico kill 13 after raid

MEXICO CITY (AP)—A pair of shootouts between troops and gunmen in northern Mexico have killed 13 people, including a bystander and a drug trafficker linked to the killing of a retired army officer. Navy spokesman Adm. Jose Luis Vergara said troops were searching a villa Friday in a suburb of Monterrey named Juarez when they were ambushed by a group of heavily armed men. Eight gunmen were killed and nine more were arrested in the initial shootout, Vergara said. Television images showed a garden littered with bloodied corpses. Several handcuffed men sat on the ground with shirts pulled over their heads and a line of automatic rifles nearby.

Guinea junta's No. 2 returns after president shot

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP)—The overnight return to Guinea on Saturday of the No. 2 man in the junta that seized power a year ago makes it more likely that the military clique will be able to hang on to power following an assassination attempt on the president. Many people, however, fear the army could fracture and plunge the country into further violence. The head of the presidential guard who is accused of having fired at point-blank range on the president was still at large, and it is unclear how many of the roughly 150 men formerly under his control will stay loyal to him.

Settlers reject Netanyahu plea to reduce tensions

JERUSALEM (AP)—Defiant West Bank settler leaders rejected a personal plea from the prime minister Thursday to respect a government-ordered construction freeze in their communities, vowing to keep confronting security forces sent to enforce the edict. In the West Bank, Jewish settlers blocked inspectors from entering a settlement to search for unauthorized construction, the third straight day of such confrontations. There has been no violence, but authorities have made at least four arrests. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu summoned settler leaders in a bid to defuse the tensions.

Health & Fitness

Fit for the holidays

By VICKY HALLETT
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

Spread healthy holiday cheer with exercise gear for the active on your shopping list.

"Personal Training With Jackie: Power Circuit Training" A personal training session for a Secret Santa-friendly price? That's what reality TV star and exercise guru Jackie Warner is offering with this DVD, which targets each large muscle group with three moves followed by a combination of all of them in a "power burn." $10 at www.amazon.com.

Vibram FiveFingers KSO Trek. The barefoot running movement goes off-road with these trail shoes that mimic a natural feel while shielding your feet. Tough but breathable kangaroo leather protects the tops of the feet, while a rugged rubber sole lessens the impact of sticks and stones below. $124.95 at City Sports. www.citysports.com.

Long Johnnies. Your gal pal will stay cozy whether she's skiing, stargazing or just snuggling in these long johns with a ladylike spin. The full lineup includes boy shorts, tights, a Henley and a half-zip top. $28 to $70 at Lucy. www.lucy.com.

Mobia. If an iPod and a treadmill mated, the result might resemble Mobia by Nautilus, a sleek white machine that promises to revolutionize cardio by slowing it down. The movement combines walking forward with stepping up, and the speed tops out at 4 mph, so it's as low-impact as can be. $1,999 at www.mobia.com.

Garmin Forerunner 405CX. Athletes might look like jocks, but deep down, they're geeks. If you need proof, just watch what happens when you give them this top-of-the-line GPS-enabled sport watch that continuously monitors time, distance, pace, calories burned and heart rate. $370 at www.target.com.

Hoopnotica travel hoop. Michelle Obama has been spotted showing off her hooping skills, so help your first lady do the same with this pull-apart, portable adult-size hoop.Yes, users can spin it around their arms for toning. $40 at www.hoopnotica.com.

Manduka Equa towel. Stop your yoga buddy from sliding away during downward-facing dog with these absorbent, lightweight towels. $40 at Lululemon. www.lululemon.com.

Novara Wulla bike jersey. This wool top will insulate and wick moisture away from your favorite biker boy and will still look sharp when at a post-ride brunch. $69.83 at REI. www.rei.com.

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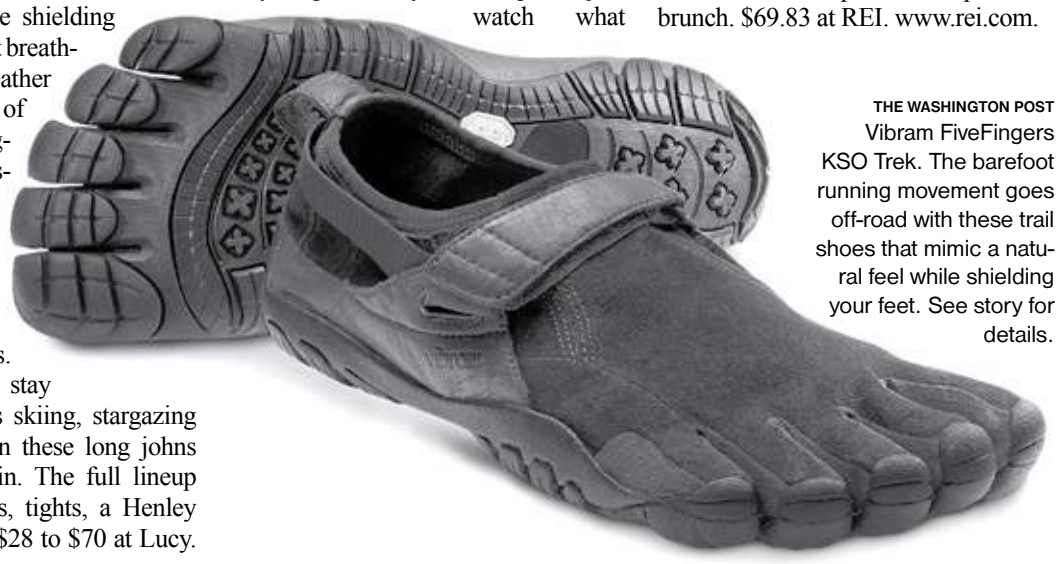
Hoopnotica travel hoop. Users can spin it around their arms for toning. See story for details.



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Vibram FiveFingers KSO Trek. The barefoot running movement goes off-road with these trail shoes that mimic a natural feel while shielding your feet. See story for details.

Give well, eat well

By JENNIFER LARUE HUGET
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Nobody wants to unwrap a book about dieting, right? But there are lots of lovely presents to give a person who's looking to eat more healthfully during the coming year. Here are a few.

Beaba Babycook. If I had a baby in my life, I'd be all over this European baby-food maker, which turns fresh, healthful vegetables, fruits, meats and other ingredients into pure, preservative- and additive-free meals for wee ones. Yum. $149.95 at www.williams-sonoma.com.

"Cake Wrecks." Here's a way to enjoy cake without eating a bite. Jen Yates' book documenting professional bakery cakes gone horribly wrong will have you laughing so hard you'll forget to eat. Plus, laughing for 10 or 15 minutes burns between 10 and 40 calories, research shows. $11.70 at www.borders.com.

Cooking Light subscription. This is my favorite source of inspiration for preparing food that's gorgeous and delicious. You'll never feel deprived eating food made from these recipes, and every issue contains valuable information about nutrition, fitness and taking care of yourself. $15 for 12 issues at www.cookinglight.com/subscribe.

Nine-inch plates. Alex Bogusky notes in his book "The 9-Inch `Diet' " that switching from your standard 12-inch dinner plates to the formerly standard nine-inch size can save calories throughout the year and help you better gauge healthful portions. When shopping (at such retailers as Target and eBay), be aware that this smaller dish is often called a salad plate. Set of four Provence salad plates, $34 at www.target.com.

Old-time gum sampler. As I wrote recently, chewing gum can help you lose weight and keep it off. But most varieties in the grocery store have artificial sweeteners, which many of us don't care for. Toss some old-fashioned sugar-sweetened gum in everyone's stocking instead. $14.95 for 15 five-stick packs (five each of three flavors) at www.vermontcountrystore.com.

THE WASHINGTON POST
OXO Good Grips ginger peeler. Adding spices such as ginger to your diet boosts flavor without adding calories. See story for details.

Journal and pen. Keeping a food journal is one of the most-recommended means of keeping your food consumption in check and identifying unhealthful eating patterns — so you can fix them! You're more likely to stick with journaling if you like the way your blank book looks and feels in your hands. Barnes & Noble has a varied supply, and they're cheap. Toss in one of the new, bleed-free Sharpies for more writing pleasure. Journals from $5 at www.barnesandnoble.com. Sharpie is $2.49 at www.sharpie.com.

"Mindfulness for Beginners" audio CD. Jon Kabat-Zinn has helped Americans grasp the concept of mindfulness: being fully aware in every waking moment. That can help you eat much more healthfully as you pay close attention to what you eat and when you eat it. $13.57 at www.amazon.com.

OXO Good Grips ginger peeler. Adding spices such as ginger to your diet boosts flavor without adding calories. As a bonus, ginger has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and can help ward off nausea. But it was never much fun to peel until this gadget came along. $7at www.oxo.com.

Mindless Cues spoon rest. Cornell University professor Brian Wansink's research shows that serving food at the table boosts overeating, while folks who fill their plates at the stove eat less. A spoon rest reminding you to serve in the kitchen might help. $14 at www.mindlessproducts.com.

Holiday blues; Going green; parenting ideas

By CHARITY BROWN
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Tis' the season to be jolly and celebrate with friends and family. But the holiday season also can be a source of blues, especially for older people who miss loved ones and their youth, and worry about their health and money. To help seniors cope, the American Geriatrics Society's Foundation for Health in Aging offers these tips:

If you feel blue:

■ Get out of the house.

■ Invite family and friends over or ask them for traveling assistance to parties and events.

■ Volunteer. Don't concentrate on self, help others. Call local schools or religious centers and ask about volunteer opportunities.

■ Drink in moderation. Too much alcohol can lower your spirits.

■ Accept your feelings and confide in someone. Not everyone feels jolly during the holidays. Talking about your feelings provides more understanding.

If an older loved one has the blues or seems depressed:

■ Invite him to get-togethers. Consider his needs — dietary and transportation.

■ Lend a hand. Offer help with shopping and/or preparations in his hosting a get-together.

■ Listen. Encourage your loved one to talk about how he is feeling and acknowledge his feelings. If you realize he's depressed, suggest he seek help with a health-care provider. Depression is treatable.

■■■

According to the EPA, Americans generate 5 million tons of trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day — 25 percent more than a six-week period at any other time of the year. Spread holiday cheer through eco-friendly methods. Jodi Helmer, author of "The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference," offers these tips:

■ Use eco-friendly packing materials to mail gifts. Mail your holiday gifts in boxes padded with recycled newspaper or the leftover paper in your shredder. You can also use real peanuts and include a note asking the recipient to feed them to the squirrels once the box is unpacked. Styrofoam accounts for up to 25 percent of the waste in our landfills.

■ Use gift bags instead of wrapping paper. Once you tear the wrapping paper off of a holiday gift, it ends up in the recycle bin but gift bags can be used over and over again. Look for gift bags made with recycled content or purchase plain paper bags and decorate them with recycled holiday cards.

■ Buy a cut Christmas tree. Almost all cut Christmas trees were grown on tree farms, which means that their stock is replenished yearly and forests aren't depleted. Cut trees are a much greener choice than artificial trees and you can recycle your cut Christmas tree. Go to www.earth911.org and enter your zip code to find out where to have your Christmas tree recycled.

■■■

During the holiday season, parents worry about getting to destinations and meal preparation but kids are excited. Keep your little ones preoccupied with activities during the lull of the trip:

■ If driving or flying, bring a bag of goodies with books, games, small toys (check batteries!) and stuffed animals. Also, take a small photo album to familiarize kids with the names and faces of relatives who will be present at dinner. And please be considerate of other passengers—avoid toys that make noise.

■ If you're hosting dinner, invite kids to help with preparations. They can set the table, decorate a platter with fruits and veggies, or even help in the kitchen. But make sure the duties are age-appropriate. Also, make appetizers or buy snacks. Kids (and even some adults) will appreciate an edible teaser prior to dinner — especially if dinner is running late.

Life & Style

George Washington, Poe auction records set in NYC

This undated photo provided by Christie's in New York shows the Olivetti manual typewriter on which author Cormac McCarthy typed all of his novels from 1958 to 2009, including "The Road" and "No Country for Old Men."

AP

NEW YORK (AP)—A letter by George Washington has sold for $3,218,500 at auction in New York City, setting a world record for a letter by America's first president, according to Christie's.

Washington's 1787 letter to nephew Bushrod Washington argues for the ratification of the newly drafted Constitution.

The letter had been owned by descendants of Bushrod Washington for more than 100 years, Christie's said. The buyer was not identified.

The letter's rarity was the reason it commanded well over its pre-sale estimate of $1.5 million to $2.5 million at the auction Friday at Rockefeller Center, said an auction house spokeswoman.

The previous record for a Washington letter was $834,500. It was set at a Christie's auction in 2002.

A volume of poetry and a partial poem handwritten by Edgar Allan Poe also set world records during an earlier auction Friday, Christie's said.

A bidding war over the poem was won by an American collector who bid $830,500, a world record for a 19th-century literary manuscript, Christie's said. The eight verses of the 16-verse poem "For Annie" was estimated to sell for $50,000 to $70,000.

A rare first edition of Poe's first book, "Tamerlane and Other Poems," sold for $662,500 at the same auction, the highest price ever paid for a 19th-century book of poetry.

Only 12 copies of the 40-page volume of poetry, published in 1827, are known to remain. It had a pre-sale estimate of between $500,000 to $700,000.

A Christie's spokeswoman did not immediately have a previous auction record for works by Poe.

The metal Olivetti typewriter Cormac McCarthy used while writing his novels, including "The Road" and "No Country for Old Men," sold at the afternoon auction for an eye-popping $254,500. It had been estimated to sell for $15,000 to $20,000.

McCarthy also invited the winner to join him for lunch at the Sante Fe Institute. The 76-year-old writer donated the auction's proceeds to the nonprofit institute in New Mexico.

The prices include a buyer's premium of 20 percent for items from $50,000 to $1 million and 12 percent for items above $1 million.

Polanski's house arrest is a splendid captivity

GSTAAD, Switzerland (AP)—Roman Polanski's life took a dramatic turn for the better Friday as he traded a Swiss jail for house arrest surrounded by family in his luxury Alpine chalet.

It's not clear how long this splendid captivity will last—the threat of extradition to the United States and a possible prison term there still hang over the 76-year-old director.

But surely there are worse fates than being stuck in the tony resort of Gstaad, gazing up at the snow-covered Swiss Alps with your wife and two children by your side—especially after two months in a Swiss jail.

Polanski cannot leave the three-story house and its garden while Swiss authorities decide whether to send him to Los Angeles to face sentencing in a 32-year-old sex case.

He will miss the pleasures of walking in the snow, skiing or Christmas shopping on the main street. Still, it's a vast improvement over his small detention cell in Winterthur, near Zurich, which had only a sink, bed, toilet, television and storage compartment.

In jail, he was allowed outside for one hour of daily exercise, could occasionally use the telephone but could only see family and friends for one hour each week. In Gstaad, Polanski can organize his days as he likes, working on his films and phoning and e-mailing whenever he wants.

The Oscar-winning director can receive guests or hold parties at the house and order in gourmet meals. He has views of snowcapped Alpine peaks, spacious rooms and all the amenities of a town known for its skill at catering to the wishes of the rich and famous.

Of course, there's the minor inconvenience of the electronic monitoring ankle bracelet, which ensures that Polanski doesn't flee like he did from U.S. justice 31 years ago.

He was wearing the ankle bracelet Friday as he arrived at the chalet in a police convoy, the Justice Ministry spokesman said.

If Polanski breaks the conditions for his bail, the Swiss government confiscates the $4.5 million he deposited. That substantial bail amount was a key element in granting the house arrest—a first in Switzerland for a detainee in an extradition case.

Polanski's two children—Elvis, 9, and Morgane, 16—and his wife, French actress Emmanuelle Seigner, eagerly awaited his arrival Friday morning. All were seen peeking out the chalet's windows from behind lace curtains.

Swiss authorities are still weighing the U.S. extradition request as well as arguments by Polanski's lawyer not to send him to Los Angeles, said Folco Galli, spokesman for the Swiss Justice Ministry. He said the extradition decision was expected "in the next weeks" but he could not say if it would happen this year.

The United States wants Polanski to face sentencing for having sex in 1977 with a 13-year-old girl.

Galli said Polanski was free to speak to the press if he wished—"but this is for him alone to decide." An hour after reaching Gstaad, Polanski exercised that right and sent word to reporters that neither he nor his wife would be making a statement Friday.

"Mr. Polanski and his wife just asked us to say they are not coming out," said a security guard, who declined to give his name. "There is no point in waiting, so you can all leave."

Police in gray-and-blue jackets and private security guarded his property, while a red-and-white striped security tape and a wooden fence marked an area around the house closed off to strangers. Shortly after Polanski's arrival, the police left.

New Caribbean art showcased during Art Basel fair

MIAMI (AP)—Hundreds of hours of shiny black cassette tape pour through a toothy shark jaw suspended from the ceiling in an untitled artwork by Bahamian artist Blue Curry.

This is not the Caribbean art tourists expect to find on their hotel walls or in gift shops.

A new exhibit showcasing Curry and 22 other Caribbean-born contemporary artists intends to expand the imagery associated with the archipelago of tropical islands between Florida and South America.

"It's not folk art. It's not souvenirs," said Miami-based Haitian artist Edouard Duval-Carrie, curator of "The Global Caribbean" exhibit.

"It's real art based on very deep historical, psychological, social, economic upheavals and movements that make this region quite a fascinating one," he said.

The exhibit opened Friday as part of Art Basel Miami Beach, the annual four-day contemporary art fair that draws collectors to the Miami area. "The Global Caribbean" is being staged in a new cultural center in Miami's gritty Little Haiti district.

Caribbean contemporary artists are seldom seen in the international art market, and "The Global Caribbean" presents their work both to regional communities and to a wider audience, said officials from Culturesfrance, a French government agency whose initiatives in the islands led to the exhibit.

The 23 artists are linked by their Caribbean heritage—hailing from Cuba, Martinique, Haiti, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad, Guadeloupe, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico—though many now live in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

The exhibit includes photography, paintings, sculptures and video installations. Duval-Carrie said each artist was selected to illustrate the region's diverse talents, connections and experiences with natural disasters, colonization and migration.

Some pieces clearly reference the legacy of slavery on Caribbean plantations. Faceless fabric dolls line up in an untitled installation by Alex Burke of Martinique. Colored pencils before the dolls appear to be oars, and the overall piece evokes a ship of stoic prisoners.

Three canvas prints by Jamaican artist Charles Campbell swirl geometric shapes with knots, bloody hand prints and indistinguishable faces. Combined, the images appear to be a mass of people struggling with an oppression beyond the frame.

The metal wires binding scrap wood, beer bottles and cast-off wheels in two sculptures initially appear as simple nets catching ocean debris. But Jamaican-born Arthur Simms said each material in his two works has a specific meaning: hemp rope for the drugs associated with that island; glass and metal for the superstition in some black communities that reflected light wards off evil; wheels for constant migration throughout the Caribbean. The deceptively rough assembly of each piece is meant to suggest the handmade carts poor Jamaican vendors push to sell their wares in the market.

AP

Artist Hew Locke, of Guyana, talks to a reporter at the opening of "The Global Caribbean" exhibit in the Little Haiti area of Miami, Friday, Dec. 4, 2009.

Underwood aims for family fun with variety show

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The variety show was once a television staple, and Carrie Underwood thinks it might be time for a resurgence.

The country music star hosts Monday's "An All-Star Holiday Special" on Fox, and believes it's just the tonic for the regular TV lineup.

"I think it's really great they're making a comeback because I think it's really good family programming, and nowadays it seems like every show is about, like, murder or police and people shooting at each other," Underwood said.

The 26-year-old Oklahoma native was too young to catch the golden age of the variety show. It once was as common as the reality show with stars like Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell sisters, Sonny and Cher, and even The Muppets mixing music and comedy to draw in a family audience.

But Underwood did her research before shooting her show in Los Angeles earlier this fall.

"I remember a little bit of the Mandrell sisters and I have gone back and seen episodes of their show just to kind of, I don't know, get some ideas and kind of see how it's done from a master's perspective," she said.

She also had variety show veteran and country music star Dolly Parton on the set to lend advice. Underwood said she'd never met Parton until they did the show together, and the two hit it off right away—especially when they realized they lived close to each other.

AP

In this Nov. 22, 2009 file photo, Carrie Underwood arrives at the 37th Annual American Music Awards in Los Angeles. The country music star hosts Monday's "An All-Star Holiday Special" on Fox, and believes it's just the tonic for the regular TV lineup.

"I told her and she was like, 'You don't live far from me, let's get together. Do you like Southern cooking? You don't look like you eat,'" Underwood said.

Brad Paisley, fellow "American Idol" winner David Cook, "Idol" host Ryan Seacrest and Neil Patrick Harris also appear in the special, along with Underwood's mother and sister.

The show caps quite the year for Underwood. She won the Academy of Country Music entertainer of the year award in the spring, and her new album, "Play On," debuted at No. 1. She also hosted the Country Music Association Awards for the second straight year.

After a quiet holiday with family, she'll turn her attention to touring in the new year, hitting the road next spring.

"I think my whole life next year will be revolving around touring," she said.

Colbert's mock anti-Canada feud spirals on the Web

NEW YORK (AP)—Stephen Colbert has been called what his mock pundit character would deem a traitorous insult: Canadian.

The host of "The Colbert Report" is—gasp!—a Canuck, or at least has a Canadian heritage, says the genealogy Web site Ancestry.com. Colbert's great-great-grandfather and his great-great-grandmother immigrated from Ireland to Canada, according to the site.

On his Comedy Central show, Colbert's "U-S-A!"-chanting character has disparaged the Great White North.

Colbert's publicist didn't respond to requests for comment.

Recently, the Colbert Nation became the official sponsor of the U.S. speedskating team. On the show, he has joined complaints that Vancouver Olympic officials have been limiting international athletes' access to facilities for the 2010 Winter Games.

He's called Canadians "syrup-suckers" and has a petition on his show's Web site urging the Vancouver Organizing Committee not to be "an ice-hole."

Though many on the speedskating team have laughed at Colbert's routine and been thankful for his sponsorship, one star, Shani Davis, on Thursday called him "a jerk."

AP

In this May 27, 2009 file photo, Stephen Colbert is shown in New York.

Davis declined to elaborate, making the comment while vetting potential questions from The Canadian Press before rejecting an interview request and walking away.

Italy police seize secret stash of masterpieces

ROME (AP)—Italian tax police said Saturday that they had seized works by Van Gogh, Picasso, Cezanne and other giants of art in a crackdown on assets hidden by the disgraced founder of the collapsed dairy company Parmalat.

Authorities estimated the 19 masterpieces stashed away in attics and basements were valued at some euro100 million ($150 million).

Parma Prosecutor Gerardo Laguardia said that, based on wiretapped phone conversations, officials believed at least one of the paintings hidden by Calisto Tanzi was about to be sold.

"We got lucky. We learned that there were negotiations under way to sell one of the paintings" and raid three apartments in the area of Parma, near Parmalat's headquarters, Laguardia said in an interview on Italy's Sky TG24 TV. He didn't identify the painting.

Bologna-based tax Police Col. Piero Iovino told The Associated Press by telephone that investigators believed the entire batch of paintings, watercolors and drawings were up to be sold. The prospective buyer was a Russian, possibly living in Italy, Iovino said.

No arrests were announced as part of the art seizure.

Tax police said Parma prosecutors are opening a probe into alleged concealing of assets in Parmalat's bankruptcy case.

Parmalat, the dairy conglomerate known for its long shelf-life milk grew from a small dairy distributor in Parma, into a diversified, multinational food company by 1990, but collapsed in 2003 under euro14 billion in debt—eight times what it had previously acknowledged—in what remains Europe's largest corporate bankruptcy. Many small investors who lost their life savings were among some 40,000 defrauded bondholders.

AP

Italian tax police officers hold a Giuseppe De Nittis painting, one of the 19 masterpieces which was seized in Parma, Italy, Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

Italian courts have already ruled that Tanzi bore the brunt of responsibility for the collapse. Tanzi was convicted by a Milan court last year of market-rigging and other charges in one of multiple probes. He is currently on trial for alleged fraudulent bankruptcy.

Tanzi has blamed the banks for the labyrinth of deals that helped swell the company to a global empire with operations in more than 30 countries, but also led to the company's collapse.

Tom Brokaw unhurt in NY highway wreck that kills 1

The accident happened about 1 p.m. as Brokaw was driving in the left lane of the northbound Bruckner Expressway in the Bronx.

Police and the Brokaws said a 1998 Ford Expedition swerved to avoid a spool of cable bouncing in the far right lane, which caused the driver of the SUV to lose control.

The Expedition overturned and then collided with the mail truck, police said. Suejas Estrada of the Bronx was thrown from the Expedition and killed. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

The Brokaws said the out-of-control Expedition forced the mail truck into the couple's lane. The truck collided with Brokaw's vehicle. Police said the mail truck's 54-year-old driver was taken to Westchester Medical Center with bumps and bruises. He was in stable condition Friday.

Brokaw, 69, and his wife, Meredith, said in a statement they were "greatly saddened by this loss of life." Brokaw didn't say in his statement where the couple was headed at the time.

The New York Police Department declined to confirm that Brokaw was involved in the accident. Police say they're investigating the accident.

Brokaw retired as NBC anchor in 2004 and was succeeded by Brian Williams. He has made frequent appearances on the network, filling in as anchor of the network's "Meet the Press" for months after Tim Russert's death in 2008.

AP

In this Friday, Dec. 4, 2009 image made from video, emergency personnel stand at the overturned SUV driven by an unidentified woman who was killed in the accident in New York.

Nicolas Cage wins UN award for humanitarian work

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Nicolas Cage has won a U.N. award night for his humanitarian work and has been appointed a goodwill ambassador for the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented the actor and filmmaker with the U.N. Correspondents Association's Global Citizen of the Year award for humanitarian endeavors.

Cage said his role will be "to shine a spotlight on the need for global justice."

The Amnesty International advocate has donated $2 million to establish a fund to help former child soldiers and led a campaign around his film, "Lord of War," to raise awareness about international arms control.

The secretary-general also presented a Global Citizen of the Year award to William Roedy, chairman of MTV Networks International, for his work to combat HIV and AIDS.

Young stars honored in Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (AP)—One group of young Hollywood stars were in the spotlight Saturday—and it wasn't for getting into a fight outside a night club or being arrested for drunken driving.

Five under-25-year-old stars were lauded Saturday for their philanthropic work.

"High School Musical" actor Corbin Bleu, singer Jesse McCartney, "iCarly" star Miranda Cosgrove, "90210" actress AnnaLynne McCord and "True Jackson" star Keke Palmer were honored for their respective charity work at Variety's third annual Power of Youth event.

"I don't think of it as charity work because I have fun doing it," said Palmer, the Nickelodeon star who was recognized for her work with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Dozens of young celebs from shows like "Wizards of Waverly Place" and "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" and movies such as "Fame" and "The Twilight Saga" series attended the outdoor block party held on the New York street set at Paramount Studios in Hollywood.

McCartney, who was honored for his work with City of Hope, recently helped raise over $800,000 along with Miley Cyrus and Demi Lovato at a special Nokia Theatre concert performance benefiting the comprehensive cancer center located northeast of Los Angeles.

AP

Actress AnnaLynne McCord arrives at the Variety Power of Youth event at Paramount Studios in Los Angeles on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

"I'm just proud to speak out about something I'm passionate about," said McCartney.

"High School Musical" actor Bleu was recognized for his role as the Starlight Children's Foundation's new spokesman while "iCarly" star Cosgrove was honored for her work with the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which she has visited several times.

"I have met a lot of kids I saw in the hospital who did get better," said Cosgrove. "That's always really amazing. I've become friends with a lot of the kids, too. I met a little girl named Sarah. She's just this really cool girl, and we e-mail each other."

David Henrie from "Wizards of Waverly Place," Bailee Madison from "Brothers" and Harry Shum Jr. from "Glee" were among the young attendees who posed for pictures in a photobooth, played video games and scarfed down cupcakes, cotton candy and pizza.

"90210" actress McCord, who was honored as the goodwill ambassador for The Blind Project, a nonprofit organization which works to raise awareness and improve the quality of life for sex-trafficking victims, wished more young stars in Hollywood were involved.

"There's a lot of twentysomethings who are enjoying their twenties, and that's great," she said. "But when you're privileged like we are as entertainers to make the money that we make and have the notoriety that we have, I think you owe it to the world to give back."

AP source: Billy Joel's daughter took pills in NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—Alexa Ray Joel, the daughter of pop star Billy Joel and supermodel Christie Brinkley, was hospitalized after taking eight pills at her Manhattan apartment, a law enforcement official said Saturday.

A friend frantically called 911 shortly after noon Saturday from the singer's Greenwich Village apartment saying Joel, 23, had taken several pills, the official told The Associated Press. Joel took eight pills, though officials didn't know what kind she had ingested, an official said; it wasn't clear whether she had accidentally overdosed or attempted suicide, the official said.

The official wasn't authorized to publicly disclose the matter and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Joel is hospitalized in stable condition and receiving treatment, Joel publicist Claire Mercuri said Saturday. She wouldn't elaborate.

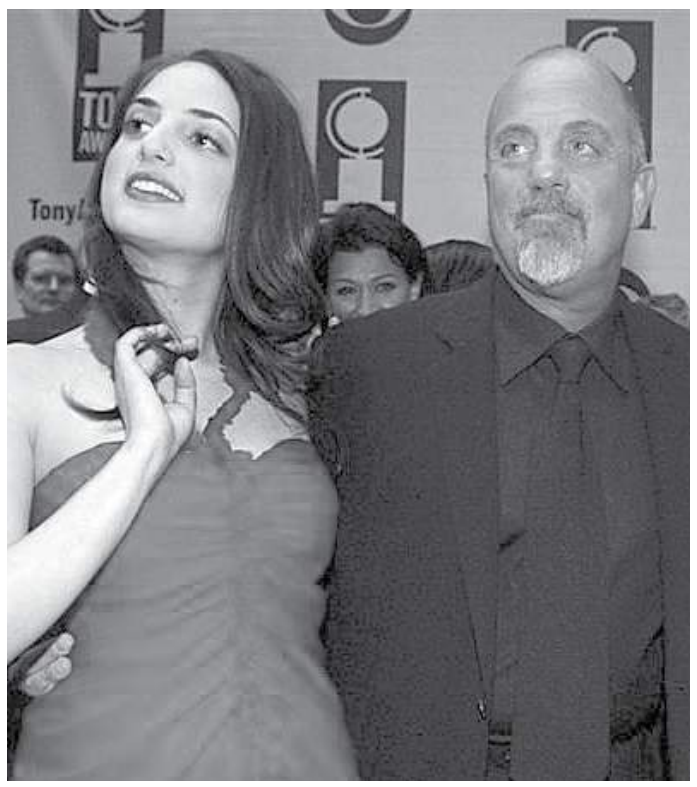
"We are currently assessing her needs," she said.

Her father said she will recover.

"She is going to be fine," Billy Joel told New York's *Newsday* newspaper on Saturday night.

Fire Department records indicate that paramedics responded to the West Village building where Joel lives at 12:21 p.m. Saturday and transported one woman to St. Vincent's Hospital. The fire department declined to identify the patient.

Joel, who was raised in Sag Harbor, a village on Long Island, attended New York University for a short time before dropping out to focus on her music career, according to her MySpace page. Her parents were divorced in 1994 after nine years of marriage.



AP

In this June 6, 2004 file photo, pianist, singer and songwriter, Alexa Ray Joel, left, joins her father, Billy Joel, for the arrivals of the 58th Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall, in New York.

The singer, songwriter and pianist self-released a short album in 2006 and debuted a new song, "Invisible," this year about a failed relationship with the opening lyrics, "They say it doesn't matter/This love is in my mind/We never got it right, anyway."

In a MySpace blog post this summer, Joel described herself as "forgotten" and said she was finding it hard to meet a nice guy.

"Just Men. UGH!!! MEN!!!!" she wrote in August. "I'm so terrible at dating—I don't know if I'll ever get used to it! And I HATE the game-playing! Can't stand it."

Joel had upcoming performances scheduled in the city, including at the New York Stock Exchange tree lighting ceremony Thursday.

Adam Lambert to appear, sing on ABC's 'The View'

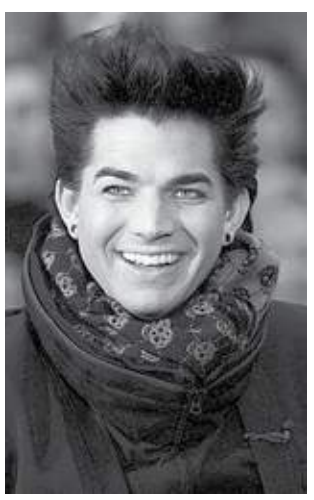
NEW YORK (AP)—ABC says glam-rocker Adam Lambert will appear and perform on its daytime talk show "The View" on Thursday.

The announcement comes almost two weeks after Lambert's racy performance on ABC's broadcast of "The American Music Awards." That led to Lambert getting axed from an appearance on the network's "Good Morning America."

Since then, Lambert, who is openly gay, complained of being dropped from two other upcoming ABC shows.

In the meantime, he has been scheduled for NBC's "The Jay Leno Show" on Dec. 21.

And his taped appearance on "The View" will air a day after he is honored by "View" co-panelist Barbara Walters on her "10 Most Fascinating People of 2009" special. That also airs on ABC.



AP

In this Nov. 25, 2009 file photo, singer Adam Lambert appears on CBS's' "The Early Show" in New York.

Opinion splits along gender lines over bathroom decency

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm writing about the letter you printed from "Right or Wrong in Wisconsin" (Nov. 9). My co-workers and I had a field day with the issue of the father shaving while his 12-year-old daughter takes her morning shower.

The women here were pretty much unanimous in agreeing with your response, while the men mostly thought there was nothing wrong. As a man writing to you, my opinion may seem a little biased, but please try to keep an open mind.

I assume that this gentleman has raised his daughter since birth, and that he changed "Lia's" diapers and bathed her when she was younger. It's ridiculous that at the young age of 12 it is suddenly inappropriate for her father to have a conversation with her (presumably) through a shower curtain.

I could understand the mother (whom he never referred to as his wife) being concerned if he was simply in the bathroom to dish about the day's issues. But that wasn't the case. He was shaving. We don't see a problem with that. We men agree that if this wasn't an issue that Lia herself raised because she was uncomfortable, then it probably shouldn't be an issue at all.

DISAGREES IN TOPEKA, KAN.

DEAR DISAGREES: I did not mean to start a war of the sexes in your workplace, so allow me to clarify the issue from my perspective. "Right or Wrong" appears to be a caring father, or he wouldn't have written me. He views his daughter as his "little girl." But at age 12, Lia is an emerging young woman both physically and emotionally. She is in transition, and her father may not recognize that fact. At 12, many girls start their periods and their breasts begin developing. Lia's mother may have noticed these changes in her daughter.

What this presents is a teachable moment—and an opportunity for a family discussion to talk about what's happening. Among the issues Lia will face in the next few years are decisions she'll have to make about drinking, drugs, sex, respect and modesty. While other cultures have a more liberal view regarding modesty, ours is less so.

And remember, it's not as though sharing the bathroom in that family is a necessity. There are two bathrooms in that house, and I think it's time one of them began using the one downstairs. If that makes me a fuddy-duddy, so be it. It's still my opinion.

DEAR ABBY: My friend recently committed suicide and although I'm still mad at times, I'm no longer sad all the time. My problem is I'm having a hard time dealing with stress.

Before, when things got hard or my workload went up, I'd work harder to get it done. Now I just become overwhelmed and all I want to do is go to bed. Is this normal? I have never had a friend die before

SAD IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR SAD: Please accept my sympathy for your loss. When someone close to me suffers an emotional shock—and the death of a friend or loved one qualifies as one—I remind him or her that shock can affect not only the emotions but also the body. That's why it's important to get extra rest and eat properly.

When a person grieves, it's not unusual to be less resilient, so listen to your body. When you become overwhelmed, chicken soup and extra rest may be in order, and it's not a cliche. However, if these feelings persist for more than a few weeks, please discuss them with your doctor because they could be a symptom of a treatable form of depression.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET A CHRISTMAS TREE?
OH, I DUNNO. PROBABLY A LITTLE AFTER NEW YEAR'S.
AFTER NEW YEAR??
SURE. WE CAN JUST GO UP THE STREET AND PICK THE BEST TREE FROM THE NEIGHBORS' DRIVEWAYS.
WHAT?!
SOMETIMES THERE'S STILL TINSEL ON THE TREE TOO, SO YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO DECORATE IT! WE'LL SAVE TIME AND MONEY!
OK, WHAT DID YOUR DAD TELL YOU THIS TIME?
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
12-7

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

HI, THERE!
TREES
I'D LIKE THE CHEAPEST TREE YOU'VE GOT!
TREES
THIS IS AN AIR FRESHENER!
CASH OR CHARGE, DIAMOND JIM?
www.garfield.com
JIM DAVIS 12-7 © 2009 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
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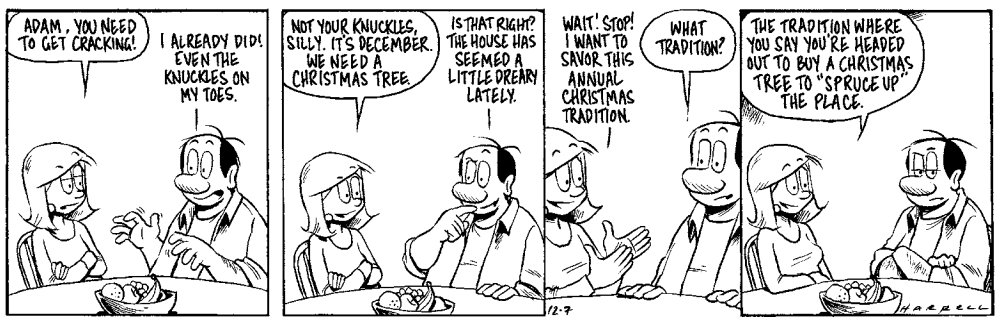
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ADAM, YOU NEED TO GET CRACKING!
I ALREADY DID! EVEN THE KNUCKLES ON MY TOES.
NOT YOUR KNUCKLES, SILLY. IT'S DECEMBER. WE NEED A CHRISTMAS TREE.
IS THAT RIGHT? THE HOUSE HAS SEEMED A LITTLE DREARY LATELY.
WAIT! STOP! I WANT TO SAVOR THIS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TRADITION.
WHAT TRADITION?
THE TRADITION WHERE YOU SAY YOU'RE HEADED OUT TO BUY A CHRISTMAS TREE TO "SPRUCE UP" THE PLACE.
12-7
HARRELL

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Airborne Dracula
4 Group of scenes
7 Antitoxins
11 Styptic agent
13 Comment from Bossy
14 Eastern bigwig
15 Actress Spelling
16 Pea holder
17 Rubik's puzzle
18 Carrot-top's secret?
20 Unaccompanied
22 Work with
24 Addled by age
28 Black leopard
32 Calculating snake?
33 Reed instrument
34 Japanese pond carp
36 Family
37 Richly luxurious
39 Annoys
41 Guard
43 Gun lobby grp.
44 Jacob's twin
46 Spouse's relative
50 Old Italian money
53 Bookkeeper (Abbr.)
55 Mrs. Dithers, in the comics
56 Out of control
57 Leap
58 Badder than bad
59 Makes up one's mind
60 Explosive stick
61 Antlered animal

DOWN
1 Shower alternative
2 Lotion additive
3 Veer
4 Rock band's need
5 Talks like a dove
6 Commotions
7 Opportunity to make amends, maybe
8 Ostrich's cousin
9 Cage part
10 Exist
12 Quick-fry beef products
19 Blond shade
21 Meadow
23 "A mouse!"
25 Not working
26 Mad king of literature
27 Sea eagles
28 Boston orchestra
29 Skilled
30 Verb's partner
31 Steal from
35 Charged bit
38 Day fractions (Abbr.)
40 Numerical prefix
42 America's Cup vessel
45 "Once — a time"
47 Cupid's field
48 Seed covering
49 Stroll
50 "The 7 Faces of Dr. —"
51 Devil's disciple
52 Deteriorate
54 Suitable

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	C	U	R	D	S	■	B	A	S	R	A	■
O	R	N	E	R	Y	■	O	S	I	E	R	S
P	A	R	S	O	N	■	P	E	R	S	O	N
E	V	E	■	P	O	P	P	A	■	H	U	E
R	E	A	M	■	D	I	E	■	V	I	S	E
A	D	L	I	B	■	T	R	O	O	P	E	R
■	■	■	E	R	R	■	S	R	I	■	■	■
T	H	I	N	A	I	R	■	C	L	O	P	S
R	A	M	S	■	P	O	T	■	A	F	R	O
A	L	P	■	D	E	C	A	F	■	F	I	N
P	O	I	S	O	N	■	P	R	I	S	O	N
S	E	S	A	M	E	■	E	A	T	E	R	Y
■	S	H	Y	E	R	■	R	U	S	T	Y	■

Saturday's answer 12-7

1	2	3	■	■	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	10
11			12	■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
18				19	■	20		21		■	■	■
■	■	■	22		23	■	24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31	■	32				
33				■	34		35	■	36			
37				38	■	39		40				
41					42	■	43			■	■	■
■	■	■	44			45	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52		■	53		54	■	55			
56				■	57			■	58			
59				■	60			■	■	61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Aaron Carter, 22; C. Thomas Howell, 43; Edd Hall, 51; Tom Waits, 60

Happy Birthday: You'll find it easy to make gains this year but will also be tempted to let what you accomplish slip through your fingers. Too much, coupled with too many promises will be your demise. Focus on what's really important to you and you can avoid experiencing regrets. Your numbers are 3, 7, 15, 22, 24, 38, 43

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Take on a challenge and you can prove a point and show how capable you are. Get together with people who can help you take an impossible task and turn it into a positive experience. Present your plans with sincerity. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Hang on to your cash. This is not the time to give when you have your own burdens to deal with. Don't be swayed by someone trying to make you feel guilty. Keep spending to a limit. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take the time to get your home and yourself ready for upcoming festivities. It's the hands-on approach and the ability to do things within a tight budget that will impress others the most. Consolidation and a strict budget will ease your stress. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): It's important that you stay on top of both domestic and professional matters that can affect your future. Now is a good time to stabilize your position by strengthening what you already have to offer. Pick up additional skills. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): The limitations or burdens that others have created emotionally must be diminished so you can focus on your professional future. Don't give in to distraction or temptation. Challenges will test your talents. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Observe but don't speak your mind if you want to avoid someone's meddling in your affairs or questioning your ability. Concentrate on the people who mean the most to you both personally and professionally. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Trouble will follow if you aren't careful about what you say in the heat of a discussion with a friend, neighbor or relative. Busy yourself with people who are more apt to agree with your position. You will gain the momentum required to apply your solutions where they'll count the most. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Bide your time and hold off making comments. Getting upset with someone who doesn't see things the same way you do will be a waste of time and may bring negative results. An unusual situation regarding your home or a family member will make you question the direction you are going. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Expect someone to surprise you with an emotional offer that is hard to refuse. A past partner will want to reconnect. Schedule a meeting over the holiday season. A challenge will get you ready to take action. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't give in and pay for someone else's mistake, even if it is the season to be generous. Be firm when dealing with people asking for cash donations. Getting involved in something for the wrong reason will have a negative outcome. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't be afraid to speak your mind, especially when it has to do with relationship concerns and your future. Expect to be questioned by someone you care about. Explain your position and what you feel you need. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Work hard and play hard and you will get outstanding results, personally and professionally. Your persistent nature will pay off and bring about a change of attitude among your peers. Talks, travel and financing may be subject to change. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, intuitive and always in search of truth. You are serious, studious and courageous.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

7			4		6			5
		5		1		4		
	1				3		6	
2		6	3		1			9
	4			9			8	
3			8		4	5		2
	2		9				5	
		4		2		8		
6			1		8			3

Difficulty Level ★ 12/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Saturday's SUDOKU Answer

5	9	1	6	3	4	7	2	8
3	4	6	2	8	7	1	9	5
7	2	8	9	1	5	4	3	6
4	7	5	3	2	1	8	6	9
9	6	3	4	5	8	2	1	7
1	8	2	7	9	6	3	5	4
2	3	7	8	6	9	5	4	1
6	1	4	5	7	2	9	8	3
8	5	9	1	4	3	6	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

HONG KONG HOTELS **Solution: 9 letters**

Y	Y	R	U	B	S	I	L	A	S	E	C	I	R	P
E	L	E	G	A	N	T	W	E	I	V	L	L	I	H
L	R	E	N	A	I	S	S	A	N	C	E	S	O	P
R	E	X	V	R	K	R	A	M	D	N	A	L	C	T
E	G	Q	M	I	A	E	N	K	O	W	L	O	O	N
B	W	U	K	E	S	H	A	C	M	Y	S	W	N	O
M	E	I	A	R	T	N	W	T	W	M	E	A	V	I
I	I	S	D	N	A	R	E	O	O	R	S	D	E	T
K	V	I	B	E	G	P	O	P	S	N	S	A	N	A
G	R	T	I	E	A	D	O	P	X	N	A	M	T	V
A	O	E	T	S	N	L	O	R	O	E	L	A	I	R
R	B	A	Y	U	I	T	S	N	T	L	C	Ⓡ	O	E
D	R	A	Y	T	R	U	O	C	G	E	I	Ⓔ	N	S
E	A	L	A	T	T	O	I	R	R	A	M	Ⓢ	A	E
N	H	N	E	E	R	G	R	E	V	E	Z	Ⓣ	I	R

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Bay, Bento, Classes, Convention, Cosmopolitan, Courtyard, Deals, Eaton, Elegant, Evergreen, Expensive, Exquisite, Garden, Guangdong, Harborview, Hillview, Hollywood, Kimberley, Kowloon, Landmark, Marriott, Metropark, Metropolis, Prices, Ramada, Rate, Renaissance, Reservation, Rest, Ritz, Salisbury, Slow, Towers, Wharney, YMCA

Last Saturday's Answer: Learning

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http:kairosuniversityus.org

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE FINANCIAL & INSURANCE SERVICES GROUP, INC., Plaintiff, -v- DONALD C. CAMACHO, Defendant.	CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0458 SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATIONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, the Plaintiff's Attorneys, whose address is P.O. Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judment by default may be taken against you for the relief of demanded in the Complaint.

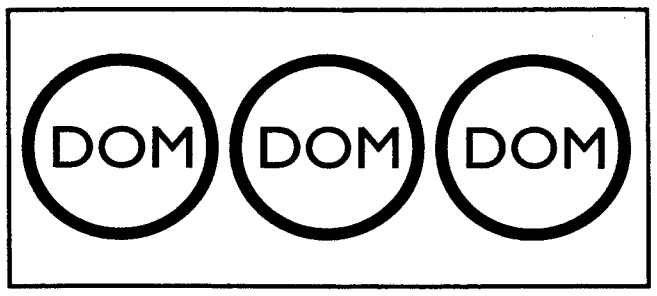
By order of the above court:

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

DATED, this 2nd day of December, 2009:

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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Find today's solution in this section

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Lourdes Kisa Tian

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

LOURDES KISA TIAN, Petitioner, vs. TIAN, SHAO AN, Respondent.	Civil Action No. 09-0567 ORDER TO APPEAR OR PLEAD

TO: THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT TIAN, SHAO AN:

YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO APPEAR OR PLEAD by the 21st day after the fourth date of publication of this ORDER TO APPEAR OR PLEAD and defend the above entitled action in the CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, at the Office of Clerk of Court, CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Ilmwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307; and answer the Petition by Petitioner Lourdes Kisa Tian, and serve a copy of your answer upon **Robert Tenorio Torres**, attorney for Petitioner Lourdes Kisa Tian, at **Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950;** and in case of failure to do so, a default will be rendered against you according to the demand of the Petition, which has been filed with the Clerk of Court.

So ORDERED this 3rd day of November, 2009.

/s/ KENNETH L. GOVENDO
SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

Benigno and Amelia Fejeran
P.O. Box 500061
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No: 233-1767

pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTION FOR: ALEXIS KIOMI ASIBAL FEJERAN, Minor Child, By: BENIGNO T. FEJERAN and AMELIA A. FEJERAN, Petitioners.	FCD AD Civil Action No. 09-0677 NOTICE OF HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption for the above-named minor child by Benigno and Amelia Fejeran, Petitioners, was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court.

A HEARING of said Petition for Adoption will be held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI on the 14th day of January, 2010 at 1:30 P.M. or as soon as thereafter.

/s/ Bernadita Sablan
Clerk of Court

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2000
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Tel No. (670) 664-3900 * * Fax No. (670) 664-3910

EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO. CGECU-09-001
OPENING DATE: 11/09/09
CLOSING DATE: 12/09/09

This examination is for the purpose of developing an Open Competitive and Promotional Eligibility list. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands that the personnel system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

POSITION AND SALARY: **ACCOUNTANT** **$25,000.00 - $30,000.00 P/A**
The salary given will be determined by the qualification of the appointee.

LOCATION: Credit Union Office, Capitol Hill, Saipan

DUTIES:
The Accountant is responsible for the overall daily record and bookkeeping of the financial accounting of the Credit Union. He or she is charged with the responsibility to assist the General Manager in reporting, forecasting, formulating, and analyzing the financial, budgetary and economic activities and to assist in proposing changes to policies and procedures affecting the same areas of responsibilities of the Credit Union. He or she must be able to operate QuickBooks Accounting System.

The Accountant has the inherent responsibility to assist the General Manager in carrying out the principles and objectives delineated and prescribed by Public Law 9-52, its subsequent amendments, the Regulations, Bylaws, Board Resolutions, and all other policies and procedures and as directed by the Board of Directors through and/or by the General Manager. The Accountant reports and answers directly to the General Manager. The Accountant acts on behalf of the General Manager whenever the General Manager is absent from the Commonwealth, mentally or physically incapacitated or as directed by the Board of Directors.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
The Accountant must possess a bachelor's degree or equivalent from a United States accredited academic institution preferably in the field of accounting with five (5) years accounting experience. However, academic degree in economics of finance or other field in the business administration will suffice as long as the applicant has five years working experience as an accountant. The Board may prescribe other qualifications.

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABE AT THE CREDIT UNION OFFICE IN CAPITOL HILL, GOV'T BUILDING #1365, ANATAHAN DRIVE. APPLICANT MUST BE A US CITIZEN OR US PERMANENT RESIDENT.

INTERESTED PERSONS SHOULD SEND OR DROP OFF (ADDRESS ABOVE) THEIR CURRENT APPLICATION FORMS AND AN UPDATE RESUME TO:
Commonwealth Government Employees'
Credit Union
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Saipan MP 96950

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ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Johnson lead Hawks past Mavericks

DALLAS (AP)—Joe Johnson scored 31 points and the Atlanta Hawks ended a streak of five winless trips to Dallas with an 80-75 victory over the Mavericks on Saturday night.

Josh Smith added 12 points, and Marvin Williams pulled down a career-high 15 rebounds to help the Hawks hand the Mavericks a second consecutive defeat for the first time this season.

Dirk Nowitzki had 32 points and nine rebounds, and Jason Terry added 17 points for the Mavericks, who set a season low for points for the second straight night.

Atlanta was clinging to a one-point lead early in the fourth quarter when the Hawks scored eight straight points, capped by Jamal Crawford's 16-footer, for a 74-65 advantage with 7:28 to play.

The Hawks turned up the defense down the stretch, forcing the Mavericks into eight straight missed field goals until Nowitzki's layup with 3:22 left pulled Dallas within 76-73.

Dallas narrowed the gap to 78-75 with 40.4 seconds remaining on Terry's two free throws, and the Mavericks had a chance to get closer after Atlanta's Mike Bibby missed a 3-pointer with 18 seconds remaining.

The Mavericks tried to get Nowitzki open for a 3-pointer, but Nowitzki committed a turnover when he kicked the ball with 9.8 seconds to play.

Johnson's two free throws with 1.5 seconds left iced the game for the Hawks.

Atlanta had dropped four of its previous six including a 114-107 home loss to the New York Knicks on Friday night.

Dallas was coming off a 98-82 defeat at Memphis on Friday night, shooting a season-worst 35 percent from the floor.

The Hawks were the fresher of the two teams in the early going, connecting on 12 of their first 22 field-goal attempts for a 27-19 edge heading into the second period.

Atlanta led by 13 in the second quarter, but the Mavericks closed with a 13-1 run over the final 7:19 of the first half as Dallas reduced the deficit to 41-40 at the break.

The Hawks went through a stretch of 10:28 in the second and third quarters without a field goal, missing 20 straight shots before a Johnson put-back pulled the Hawks within 48-45.

AP

Atlanta Hawks guard Joe Johnson (2) shoots the ball against Dallas Mavericks guards Jason Terry (31) and Jose Barea (11) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

Johnson scored the final two baskets of the third quarter, the second with 3.2 seconds left, and Atlanta carried a 64-60 lead into the final quarter.

TrailBlazers 90, Rockets 89

In Portland, Oregon, Brandon Roy scored 28 points and the winning basket to help Portland beat Houston.

Roy scored on a driving layup with 3 seconds left, and Houston's Aaron Brooks missed on the other end to give Portland a victory that was tarnished by the loss of center Greg Oden to a freak injury in the first quarter.

Oden fractured his left kneecap while jumping to defend Brooks. The former No. 1 draft pick will undergo surgery and is expected to miss the rest of the season. Play was stopped for 7 minutes while the 7-footer was tended to.

Andre Miller had 16 of his 24 points in the third quarter for the Blazers, who rallied from a 15-point deficit to snap a three-game losing streak.

Carl Landry led Houston with 23 points.

Suns 115, Kings 107

In Phoenix, the hosts used a late spree of 3-pointers to shake off Sacramento.

Steve Nash scored 32 points and Amare Stoudemire had 18 points and 21 rebounds for the Suns, who improved to 7-0 at home.

Tyreke Evans scored 21 points for the Kings, who lost for the eighth straight time in Phoenix.

Nuggets 106, Spurs 99

In San Antonio, Denver opened a four-game road trip with victory over San Antonio.

Carmelo Anthony scored 34 points, and Chauncey Billups added 18 for the Nuggets.

Tony Parker led San Antonio with 27 points.

Magic 126, Warriors 118

In Oakland, California, Vince Carter had 27 points and seven assists in Orlando's comeback win over Golden State.

Mickael Pietrus scored a season-high 22 points for the Magic, who outscored the Warriors 17-4 down the stretch, and have won five straight.

Monta Ellis had 33 points and seven assists for the Warriors.

Raptors 110, Bulls 78

In Chicago, Chris Bosh had 25 points and 12 rebounds to lead Toronto to a thrashing of Chicago.

Bosh had 13 points in the opening quarter alone and hit nine of 12 shots overall in just 22 minutes.

While Toronto's consecutive wins steadied the ship after five straight defeats, Chicago slid to its seventh loss in eight games.

Clippers 88, Pacers 72

In Los Angeles, the home team put on a game-ending run of 18 points to 4 to shake off Indiana.

Al Thornton scored 19 points, and Baron Davis had eight of his 12 points during the late burst.

Troy Murphy led Indiana with 13 points.

Timberwolves 108, Jazz 101

In Minneapolis, Minnesota won just its third game of the season, overcoming Utah.

Kevin Love had 18 points and 10 rebounds in his second game back from a broken hand, as the Wolves improved their meager record to 3-17.

Ryan Gomes had 23 points on 9-of-10 shooting for Minnesota, while Utah's Carlos Boozer had 21 points and 13 rebounds.

Bobcats 106, 76ers 105

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Raymond Felton's driving layup with 5 seconds left capped a late comeback as Charlotte edged slumping Philadelphia.

A night after the Bobcats embarrassingly lost to the previously winless New Jersey, they appeared ready to hand the 76ers their first win in more than two weeks.

But Boris Diaw hit a 3-pointer and a scoop shot in a late run, and Felton beat a screen and sank the go-ahead basket.

Andre Iguodala missed a fadeaway at the buzzer for the 76ers, who blew a 10-point fourth-quarter lead in their ninth straight loss.

Blazers' Oden expected to miss rest of season

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Portland center Greg Oden will likely miss the season after fracturing his left knee cap during a game against Houston on Saturday night.

Oden will undergo surgery, the Trail Blazers said.

The 7-foot center dropped to the floor clutching his left knee and grimacing after colliding with a driving Aaron Brooks midway through the first quarter.

He was almost immediately surrounded by trainers and physicians. The crowd at the Rose Garden stood and chanted "Oden! Oden!"

The game was stopped for some 7 minutes. Finally, Oden was gently moved to a stretcher and wheeled from the court. He underwent an MRI shortly thereafter.

Oden, the No. 1 pick in the 2007 NBA draft out of Ohio State, has been plagued by injures for his entire NBA career.

The 7-footer missed rookie season after undergoing microfracture surgery on his right knee. Last season, Oden sat out six games after injuring his right foot in the season opener against the Lakers, then missed 14 games after the All-Star break with a bone chip in his left knee. He finished the season averaging 8.9 points and 7 rebounds.

Oden lost weight during the offseason and was averaging 11.7 points and 8.8 rebounds this season as a starter.

The Blazers have been beset by injuries. Starting forward Nicolas Batum needed shoulder surgery just before the opener. Fellow forward Travis Outlaw fractured his foot in mid-November and required surgery.

Forward Rudy Fernandez was out of Saturday night's game with sciatic pain and set to undergo an MRI. It was uncertain if he would be with the team on an upcoming four-game road trip starting with the Knicks on Monday.

Even coach Nate McMillan was set to undergo surgery Monday after rupturing his right Achilles' tendon during practice.

The coach was participating in practice because the team is so shorthanded. He will miss the team's upcoming road trip, replaced by assistant coach Dean Demopoulos.

McDowell, Yang tied for Chevron lead

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Graeme McDowell was surprised as anyone to hear the news last week about Tiger Woods in a car accident, having no idea where it would lead - for either of them.

Woods was caught up in allegations of extramarital affairs that brought made headlines around the world. McDowell was summoned to replace him in the Chevron World Challenge, which could turn into quite the bounty.

McDowell played a six-hole stretch at Sherwood in 6-under par Saturday on his way to a 6-under 66, giving him a share of the lead with Y.E. Yang (71) going into the final round of the $5.75 tournament.

They were at 10-under 206, two shots ahead of Padraig Harrington and European tour money winner Lee Westwood, with Ian Poulter and Jim Furyk another shot behind.

"Obviously, a huge blow for the tournament not to have Tiger here," McDowell said. "I feel very fortunate to receive the invite. It was a great opportunity for me."

Timing is everything for McDowell, a 30-year-old from Northern Ireland who is No. 55 in the world. Because this is the first year Woods' tournament offers world ranking points, a victory or even top finish likely makes him eligible for the Masters.

McDowell was at the World Cup in China last week, presumably his last tournament of the year. He planned to go home to Florida instead of chasing world ranking points in Australia, believing he could crack the top 50 next year to get an Augusta National invite.

That's when he got the call that Woods might not play.

He was to fly through Los Angeles on his way home, and when he arrived Sunday night, he was asked to stick around for one day until Woods knew for sure what he was doing.

McDowell ran off three straight birdies on his back nine, then ripped a 3-wood into 15 feet on the par-5 13th for an eagle, finishing his stretch with a long birdie on the 15th. His only flaw came from a soft lie in the bunker on the par-5 16th, where a fat shot went into the hazard and he took double bogey.

Yang also was in China for the World Cup and knew he was playing Sherwood all along. He wasn't planning on a fever that has dogged him throughout the week, although it's hard to tell from the score.

The PGA champion opened with a birdie with hopes of a big day, then stalled until making two birdies on the back nine.

"As the day went by and my body wore down a bit more, I bogeyed a few holes," he said.

Oddly enough, few players felt worse than Harrington, who had a 70 and is very much in contention to win for the first time this year. Why the sad face? Harrington isn't quite sure.

The Irishman felt no coordination over any of his shots, one of those days when he walked off the first green and couldn't wait to get back to the clubhouse.

"I must have got out of be don the wrong side or something," Harrington said. "Something wasn't right today. I played great yesterday, played good the first day, played horrible today. Who know what will happen tomorrow?"

Jets' Sanchez has sprained PCL in right knee

New York Jets' Mark Sanchez (6) runs for a first down as he is tackled by Buffalo Bills' Reggie Corner (27) during the third quarter of an NFL football game at the Rogers Centre in Toronto, Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009.

AP

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)—Mark Sanchez's headfirst dive gave the New York Jets a big first down—and a huge scare.

Rest easy, Rex. The Sanchise isn't seriously injured.

Sanchez might be able to play in New York's next game after spraining the posterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during the Jets' 19-13 win over Buffalo on Thursday night. Coach Rex Ryan said an MRI exam Friday revealed the severity of the injury, which could have been much worse.

"I feel good that it sounds like he's going to be healthy," Ryan said. "I think that is the best news we could've hoped for."

Ryan said Sanchez will initially wear a brace to stabilize the knee, and is optimistic the rookie could be ready to go against the Buccaneers at Tampa Bay on Dec. 13. Since the Jets played Thursday, they have 10 days before their next game—giving Sanchez extra time to heal. That could be good news for the Jets (6-6), who kept their slim playoff hopes alive with the win over the Bills.

"We'll see how he is during the week," Ryan said, "but it was encouraging news."

Sanchez was injured when he dived headfirst on an 8-yard run early in the third quarter. He was examined by trainers on the sideline and replaced by Kellen Clemens before he made his way with a slight limp to the locker room.

Sanchez was already nursing a sore left knee after he was hurt in a 17-6 win over Carolina last weekend. Concerned about Sanchez's sliding abilities, Ryan had brought in Yankees manager Joe Girardi for a tutorial Tuesday.

Despite that session, Sanchez went headfirst instead of feet first on the play he was injured, and defended his actions after the game.

"In the heat of the moment, I don't know how else to explain it, I was really trying to get a first down and advance the chains," Sanchez said. "That's just the way I play."

Ryan was angry and frustrated by Sanchez's decision, calling him a "knucklehead" after the game. The coach said he hadn't spoken to Sanchez on Friday, but didn't back down from his initial comments.

"Everything I mentioned is for the safety of him," Ryan said. "I want him to be around a long time. I think my comments and all that, it's because I care about him."

Ryan said he would actually have preferred Sanchez to not get the first down over risking injury on a headfirst dive.

"It's weird for me to say that, but it's the truth," he said. "More than anything, I want him to be healthy."

Ryan mentioned the late Steve McNair, whose gritty approach often left him injured, and said there are plenty of other examples of players suffering concussions and other injuries.

"If you polled 32 quarterbacks, you may get 30 of them who said, 'Go for it,' or 31 of them," Ryan said. "But, he's my quarterback. He's our quarterback, and I want him to slide."

Ryan said Sanchez's sliding problems have been an issue since training camp, when the coaches first began urging the quarterback to slide instead of dive. Ryan realizes Sanchez's instinct is to go headfirst.

"Obviously, that's what he's more comfortable doing, but in the long run, he's going to stay healthier longer by sliding," Ryan said. "That's all I'm trying to do, is get his instincts to, 'OK, I need to slide.' If that means a public bashing by me, if you will, this is like one of my sons here. That's how you approach it."

Sanchez was 7 of 15 for 104 yards and a touchdown against Buffalo before leaving. Ryan said he actually didn't realize Sanchez was out of the game until he looked up and saw Clemens under center.

"I don't know if I was over there with the defense or what, must've been," he said, "but I came back and was like, 'Where's Sanchez?'"

Clemens finished the game and was 1 of 2 for 14 yards. In his fourth season, he has actually started fewer games than Sanchez. Clemens started eight games in 2007, but got into just two games last season with Brett Favre here, and then lost the position competition to Sanchez this summer. He should get the bulk of the first-team snaps, at least early on, in practice next week.

"That'll be huge," Clemens said. "Having a chance to throw to some of these guys and just get some reps in our offense where you can really sit back and evaluate it will be huge going into next game, if I'm playing in the next game. We'll see how things go."

Holmgren would like to talk return to Seahawks

SEATTLE (AP)—Mike Holmgren wants to talk to the Seahawks about coming back.

Seattle's former coach and one-time general manager said Friday during his semi-weekly radio show in Seattle that he'd like to talk to Seahawks owner Paul Allen and chief executive officer Tod Leiweke about becoming the team's GM and perhaps president.

Those titles became vacant on Thursday when the Seahawks forced Tim Ruskell to resign weeks before his five-year contract was to end.

"Absolutely, I would like to talk to them," Holmgren said on KJR AM from Arizona, where he has one of his homes.

The 61-year-old former Super Bowl-winning coach with Green Bay is the Seahawks' longest-tenured and winningest coach. He spent 1999-08 remaking Seattle into an NFC champion during the 2005 season and a perennial playoff team until its fall the last two years.

Holmgren acknowledged it was a "weird" circumstance that finds him a candidate to return to the Seahawks one year after he took 2009 off to fulfill a promise he'd made to his wife and family, after his coaching contract with Seattle ended in January.

Cleveland and Buffalo are two other teams that have been linked to interest in Holmgren, who hasn't decided whether he wants to come back as a coach or as an executive. Other teams could be angling for him soon, too.

None have the inherent advantages present in Seattle, where Holmgren still owns a home, where his family is now rooted—and where Holmgren still has experience with and detailed knowledge of the roster.

"I think I've made it pretty clear I'd like to go back to work after this season. I didn't know where. This is a little bit of a surprising development in Seattle," he said.

"But I've also said this, that the people and the team has to want you. The situation has to be right, the opening has to be right. And that's why I've tried to keep an open mind, not get too emotional about it ... This is not news: my family is there, I have a strong attachment to the city and my time there. But I also know things change. You never know. The organization has to feel you're the right fit.

"If the fit is right, who knows?"

With a teary-eyed Ruskell seated to his left on Thursday, Leiweke was asked if Holmgren was a candidate to replace the architect of Seattle's 8-19 record the last two seasons.

"I'm just not going to go there," Leiweke said of Holmgren. "I'm just not going to talk about that today."

Leiweke said he expects Jim Mora, who replaced Holmgren in January, is close to Ruskell and has three more years remaining on his contract, to remain Seattle's coach.

The Seahawks have hired a national search firm to help them find a new GM. Holmgren thinks Leiweke, with his business acumen, is already fulfilling the traditional duties of an NFL team president.

Holmgren said one of his grown daughters did research on the organizational structure of each NFL team before this season. She prepared a book for him that he's studied to learn which teams have the traditional separation of president, GM and coach and how many are like the Seahawks, which had Ruskell as both the president and GM.

Holmgren said as he talks to teams for a return in 2010 he will be keenly interested in "how the owner and organization wants to set it up ... I'd have to have a fair about of input in the major decisions."

Leiweke said the search to replace Ruskell has already started.

"I will tell you this, that there's going to be a process," Leiweke said. "We're going to do a thorough audit of this football team and we're going to be very, very careful going forward to ensure that we find just the right person to lead the organization."

NFL BRIEFS

4 Saints have injuries, won't play at Washington

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The New Orleans Saints will be missing four defensive players due to injuries for their game against the Washington Redskins. The Saints said Saturday that linebackers Marvin Mitchell and Scott Fujita, and cornerbacks Randall Gay and Jabari Greer will not play. Mitchell and Gay have hamstring injuries, Greer has a hurt groin and Fujita is sidelined with a knee injury. The Saints visit the Redskins on Sunday.

Umenyiora, Robbins practice with Giants' 2nd unit

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—The struggling New York Giants continued to tinker with their defensive line on Friday, demoting longtime starting end Osi Umenyiora and starting tackle Fred Robbins to the second unit during practice. Mathias Kiwanuka replaced Umenyiora and Chris Canty took Robbins' place on the first unit. New York has lost five of its last six games and is hoping to salvage its season going into a key NFC East matchup at home against Dallas. If the changes remain in place Sunday, it would mark the first time since 2004 that former Pro Bowler Umenyiora did not start when healthy and the first time since 2007 that Robbins was a reserve. Giants coach Tom Coughlin did not want to address any personnel changes.

PROS

From Page 28

3:22:24 to complete the Top 3 in the women's division.

In the men's division, rounding out the Top 3 were Russia's Eugeniy Smarchkov (3:03:26) and Korea's Hwan Geol Lee (3:14:00).

'Hell of a race'

Bagenov had been to tough races in the past, such as the Russian National Championships and UCI-sanctioned races, and admitted the weekend event was among the list.

"The name (of the race) fits it," Bagenov said through an interpreter.

It was come-from-behind win for Bagenov, who was trailed by countryman Smarchkov in the first 50-km of the race before the former caught the latter past Aqua Resort Club.

The two Russian riders accompanied each other going up to Radar Tower and then enjoyed cruising the scenic and historic sites of island, such as the Suicide Cliff, Bird Island, Grotto, and Banzai Cliff.

A few meters away from the finish line loop, the two Russian riders held hands, congratulated each other, and then raised their arms when they entered the loop en route to the finish line. Smarchkov seemed headed for the finish line first, but slowed down, and allowed his fellow pro to take the bragging rights.

"The plan was for us to stay close together, so we can help each other. It doesn't matter who wins, as long as we are safe and we are together," said Smarchkov, who was seen lending his bottle of water to Bagenov going down to the finish line after several tough climbs.

Smarchkov pulled away early, leaving the main pack, which included Halliday, Carey, and Bagenov, going to the airport road. He was still ahead heading down to Capital Hill after negotiating the long and zigzag road to Kingfisher Golf Links before Bagenov started to eat up his lead.

Perfect weather

After it rained for the past four days, the more than 100 riders were greeted with a bright and sunny weather on the race day.

"It was a perfect weather for a tough race," Bagenov said.

"It was humid, but nonetheless, the weather was fine. When we went down to retrace the course it just rained, so it was a bit difficult and I was worried it will rain on race day and we, especially the first-timers, will have a lot of problems. However, it turned to be a good race," Halliday said.

"The only problem I had was I was sweating a lot. I usually race in a cool weather so this morning, I have to wipe my face and hands often and get a tight grip on my bars," the Adelaide native said.

Halliday added pacing was also her concern.

"It was a long race with a lot of climbs, so if you will give most of your energy in the first part of the race, you will end up too exhausted going to the finish. What I did was kept pace with the main group, who had been into the same course, then slowly increased my speed going into the last 50 kilometers," the Australian pro said.

Halliday, Carey, and Lombard were still in the main pack going up to Kagman from the backroad before the Australian pro pulled away when the climb to Radar Tower began. Halliday widened the gap going to the scenic spots in Marpi and then enjoyed a cruise along Beach Road back to the starting and finish line at the southern park of the Pacific Islands Club.

HYATT

From Page 28

bert C. Ada Gymnasium.

After a sorry loss to Department of Community and Cultural Affairs in the first round of the playoffs, pennant champion Hyatt vented its ire on CPA-Accounting, 97-70, to keep its finals bid alive.

Also recording its first win in the double-elimination playoffs was Tinian, which outgunned Micronesian Brokers, Inc., 119-96.

The loss booted out CPA-Accounting and MBI from the eight-team playoff round. CPA-Accounting lost its first game against Docomo, while MBI bowed to IT&E.

Tinian was forced to drop its first game in the playoffs after failing to show up for its game against Public School System on Wednesday. When Tinian had the chance to play, it made the most of it, clobbering MBI.

Tinian went ahead by only 10 points at the end of the first period, 30-20, and pulled away in the second half when it outscored MBI, 35-15.

MBI never recovered from thereon, as it did not have enough manpower to make a comeback. MBI had only five players making it to the scoreboard.

Tinian had four players firing 20-plus points with Ringo Reyes drilling 26, Ton Borja and Leo Pascua chipping 23 apiece, and John Santos adding 21.

In the first game, a jackrabbit start helped Hyatt control the match en route to a 27-point win.

Both Hyatt and CPA-Accounting played with depleted lineups with the former having only six players and the latter fielding five. However, Hyatt's guns were blazing early, hitting three triples for a 33-16 lead at the end of the first canto.

Hyatt made it 56-32 at halftime, as it continued to connect from outside and also gained several fastbreak layups courtesy of Dave Sablan.

Sablan top-scored for Hyatt with 38 points, while Nate Mateo drilled 25.

Hyatt's next foe will be the loser between the DCCA-PSS game. Tinian will square off against the loser of the IT&E-Docomo tiff.

First Game

Hyatt 97 – Sablan 38, Mateo 25, Gabaldon 11, Lizama 9, Libuw 8, Arreza 6.

CPA-Accounting 70 – Apelo 29, Camacho 19, Maratita 12, Schuler 8, Sasamoto 2.

Scoring by quarters: 33-16, 56-32, 77-50, 97-70.

Second Game

Tinian 119 – R. Reyes 26, T. Borja 23, L. Pascua 23, Santos 21, P. Manglona 10, J. Reyes 9.

MBI 96 – Devero 26, Demapan 22, Trajano 15, Guiab 13, Capalad 11.

Scoring by quarters: 30-20, 65-35, 87-73, 119-96.

SCS

From Page 28

blerville Elementary School after drilling a 3-1 victory in the boys division finals.

Jehn Joyner drilled two goals for Tsunami while Joel Jang added one, and goalie Kaisei Toda made several saves to lift SCS to its first title in the U12 league.

Koblerville failed to defend its title after drawing only one goal from Frederick Encabo.

Joining Joyner, Jang, and Toda on the champion team were Ryu Tanzawa, Toy Lee, Steven Choi, Jason Lee, William Fong, William Johnson, Pedro Tenorio, Exequiel Tenorio, and Mikey Johnson. Amanda Allen is Tsunami's coach.

SCS' title win on Saturday completed its domination of the league. Tsunami topped the regular season of the northern division and also finished first in the round-robin playoffs to notch the first finals seat.

In the southern side, Koblerville was second in the regular season and also a runner-up in the playoffs.

In the battle for third place, Dandan Elementary School beat Saipan International School. All Top 4 finishers were awarded with trophies. The champion team had a separate trophy besides the perpetual one, where names of the champions are on display.

Dandan rules girls division

In the girls finals, Dandan Elementary School edged Koblerville in a shootout, 3-0.

The regulation ended at 1-1 after Sonia Maria Isaac scored for the Lady Umangs and Ayana Ongelungel tallied one goal for the Lady Tottots.

In the shootout, goalie Jayleen Borja was steady for Dandan, allowing no goals to Koblerville in five tries.

In contrast, Dandan made three goals, one each from Ongelungel, Jaennalin Bonie, and Melisha Lizama.

Danny Fitial coached Dandan to a title win. Other members of the team were Jolena Gopez, Maria Reyes, Mercedes Aldan, Dazian Reusora, Naomi Lizama Cherry Jean Ongelungel, Younice Remoket, Precious Inoke, Helen Sablan, Augela Cabrera, Janell Reyes, and Brooklyn Ibanez.

Meanwhile, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association would like to thank the following for supporting the U12 league: Hopwood Junior High School, Triple J Super Fresh Market, Gatorade, Tan Holdings, and American Red Cross.

PACQUIAO

From Page 28

Top Rank plans to send a survey team to Dallas next week to examine the new, $1.2 billion Cowboys Stadium, the person said. Team owner Jerry Jones said Wednesday that the Cowboys "are still desirous of looking at what we can do."

The other possibilities are the New Orleans Superdome and venues in Las Vegas, including the MGM Grand and a temporary outdoor stadium on the Strip.

The fight would be for Pacquiao's WBO welterweight title, which he won in November with an impressive 12th-round stoppage of Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas.

Michael Koncz, who is advising Pacquiao, said Friday that the contracts need "fine tuning" but declined to elaborate. Koncz added that Pacquiao is "very comfortable" with March 13.

"Manny has some additional requirements, requests, which Arum didn't think was a problem," Koncz said. "The requests of Manny were so realistic that Arum doesn't feel it's a problem and it's pretty much a done deal."

The bout, between two of the world's top five pound-for-pound boxers, could be the richest ever, assuming projections are accurate. Pacquiao's fight against Cotto sold 1.25 million pay-per-views, while Mayweather's comeback victory over Juan Manuel Marquez in September attracted 1.05 million.

The richest fight ever was in May 2007, when Mayweather's split-decision win over Oscar De La Hoya generated 2.4 million buys for $120 million in pay-per-view revenue.

The potential Pacquiao-Mayweather fight certainly would generate widespread international appeal, pitting the flamboyant American Mayweather against the popular and charismatic Filipino.

Pacquiao has won an unprecedented seven titles in seven weight divisions, although his popularity has grown far beyond the sport. He was featured on the cover of the Asian version of Time magazine, is wrapping up filming of an action movie called "Wapakman," and submitted his candidacy for the 2010 elections on Tuesday.

"The difference between Floyd and others I have fought is that Floyd makes a lot of trash talk that should not be imitated by young people," Pacquiao told GMA television, when asked about the potential matchup.

Pacquiao's political ambitions are the reason the fight was moved up to mid-March. He plans to start campaigning in April in his second attempt at a congressional seat.

"March 13 is OK," Pacquiao told GMA.

"Nobody knows his body better than Manny," Koncz said. "If Manny feels that that's plenty of time to rest and recover, then you know, he has to do what he feels is right."

Pacquiao and trainer Freddie Roach would again begin their training in the Philippines, even though Pacquiao is such a national hero that hundreds of people trail him on morning runs and crowd around gym windows to watch him spar. Roach expressed concern about the distraction before Pacquiao demolished Cotto in the most impressive display of his career.

The Filipino champion has said he would spend about 12 weeks in camp, rather than the eight weeks he normally takes to prepare for a fight. That would mean Pacquiao would begin working out in about three weeks.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	16	4	.800	–
Toronto	9	13	.409	8
New York	5	15	.250	11
Philadelphia	5	15	.250	11
New Jersey	1	18	.053	14 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	16	4	.800	–
Atlanta	14	6	.700	2
Miami	10	9	.526	5 1/2
Charlotte	8	11	.421	7 1/2
Washington	7	11	.389	8

Central Division

Cleveland	14	5	.737	–
Milwaukee	9	9	.500	4 1/2
Chicago	7	11	.389	6 1/2
Detroit	7	12	.368	7
Indiana	6	12	.333	7 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	14	7	.667	–
Houston	11	9	.550	2 1/2
San Antonio	9	8	.529	3
New Orleans	8	11	.421	5
Memphis	8	12	.400	5 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	15	5	.750	–
Portland	13	8	.619	2 1/2
Utah	11	8	.579	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	10	9	.526	4 1/2
Minnesota	3	17	.150	12

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	15	3	.833	–
Phoenix	15	5	.750	1
Sacramento	9	9	.500	6
L.A. Clippers	9	11	.450	7
Golden State	6	13	.316	9 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Charlotte 106, Philadelphia 105
Minnesota 108, Utah 101
Toronto 110, Chicago 78
Denver 106, San Antonio 99
Atlanta 80, Dallas 75
Phoenix 115, Sacramento 107
Portland 90, Houston 89
L.A. Clippers 88, Indiana 72
Orlando 126, Golden State 118

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	19	195	166	574	30.2
Bryant, LAL	18	196	115	523	29.1
Durant, OKC	19	183	146	534	28.1
James, CLE	19	184	136	531	27.9
Wade, MIA	19	166	157	507	26.7
Nowitzki, DAL	20	185	145	529	26.5
Granger, IND	16	126	99	403	25.2
Bosh, TOR	21	172	162	512	24.4
Ellis, GOL	18	169	81	430	23.9
Jennings, MIL	18	141	56	381	21.2
Arenas, WAS	18	132	84	380	21.1
Johnson, ATL	19	154	65	398	20.9
Boozer, UTA	18	151	75	377	20.9
Gay, MEM	19	150	76	390	20.5
Roy, POR	20	137	100	400	20.0
Harrington, NYK	20	142	81	397	19.9
Gordon, DET	17	114	76	331	19.5
Evans, SAC	16	111	76	308	19.3
Stoudemire, PHX	19	136	92	364	19.2
Williams, UTA	16	119	47	306	19.1

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Howard, ORL	116	178	.652
Perkins, BOS	92	143	.643
Gasol, MEM	105	171	.614
Oden, POR	92	152	.605
Hilario, DEN	104	174	.598
Paul, NOR	91	156	.583
Bynum, LAL	118	204	.578
Horford, ATL	106	185	.573
Stoudemire, PHX	136	238	.571
Landry, HOU	116	204	.569

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	19	74	160	234	12.3
Bosh, TOR	21	81	174	255	12.1
Noah, CHI	17	69	136	205	12.1
Wallace, CHA	18	41	176	217	12.1
Duncan, SAN	14	45	111	156	11.1
Boozer, UTA	18	38	160	198	11.0
Haywood, WAS	18	81	114	195	10.8
Camby, LAC	19	47	155	202	10.6
Okafor, NOR	19	61	132	193	10.2
Bynum, LAL	16	49	112	161	10.1

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	19	218	11.5
Williams, UTA	16	158	9.9
Paul, NOR	11	107	9.7
Rondo, BOS	20	180	9.0
Kidd, DAL	20	179	9.0
James, CLE	19	157	8.3
Westbrook, OKC	19	134	7.1
B. Davis, LAC	19	133	7.0
Calderon, TOR	21	137	6.5
Arenas, WAS	18	115	6.4

CHEVRON WORLD CHALLENGE SCORES

THOUSAND OAKS, California (AP) — Scores Friday from the $5.75 million Chevron World Challenge at the par-72, 7,027-yard Sherwood Country Club:

SECOND ROUND

Y.E. Yang	70-65—135
Kenny Perry	72-65—137
Ian Poulter	68-69—137
Padraig Harrington	69-68—137
Sean O'Hair	71-67—138
Lee Westwood	71-67—138
Zach Johnson	68-70—138
Graeme McDowell	71-69—140
Lucas Glover	74-67—141
Jim Furyk	70-71—141
Camilo Villegas	73-69—142
Mike Weir	73-70—143
Stewart Cink	70-73—143
Paul Casey	75-69—144
Martin Kaymer	73-72—145
Anthony Kim	71-74—145
Steve Stricker	71-74—145
Justin Leonard	72-74—146

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

PILCOWA STANDINGS

Open

Diamond	3	1
Saipan Fresh	3	1
IT&E	2	1
Noni Saipan	1	2
NCIC	0	3

Masters

Ebisuya	4	0
University of Loyola	3	1
Wushin	1	2
GEC	1	2
Cool Water	1	3

The Week in Sports

Historic week for tennis community

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI tennis had a historic week, as the Inaugural Tan Holdings Tennis Classic drew a record number of players for its two-weekend event.

The Tan Holdings attracted more than 200 players from Guam and Saipan, the most in any tennis tournaments hosted in the CNMI.

The two-weekend tournament was capped by junior singles events in three age groups in the boys and girls division and five categories in the adults doubles.

Spicing up the historic week were the other leagues and tournaments that kept members of the sports community busy.

Over at the Capital Hill Ballfield, Division of Youth Services concluded the 3rd Annual Thanksgiving Youth Slowpitch Softball Tournament with two teams emerging as repeat champions.

Brabu duplicated its 2008 feat when it ruled anew the 16 to 18 age group finals of the Thanksgiving tournament, beating Kagman High School in the 2009 title match, 12-9.

Also notching back-to-back titles were 2008 champion Patriots, who whipped Kulan Zamu in the 13 to 15 age group finals, 9-1. The 9 to 12 age group had a new champion Kagman, which topped the Twins in the finals, 9-2.

Still at the Capital Hill Ballfield, the Chamolinian Softball Association-organized 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League kicked off last week with 21 teams competing for the champion.

Nine teams won their debuts, namely San Roque, Team Fuegu, Red Eye, Ramblers, Lancheros, Island Rebels, Chura, Natibu, and Man Amigo.

Over at the Saipan Skate Park in Middle Road, more than 50 skaters, youth and adults alike participated in the Island SK8 Society's skateboard competition.

The weekend event produced two participants winning two divisions each.

Paul Suarez ruled the freestyle Sk8Park final in the 11 to 15 age group and the game of S-K-A-T-E, while Agbanlog topped the game of S-K-A-T-E in the 16-and-above division and the best trick category.

Other top performers were Corey Llagas (Sk8Park/16-and-above division) and Charles Bautista (best trick/11 to 15 age group).

The CNMI's Frank "The Crank" Camacho emerged as the best fighter in the adult blue belt's meio-pesado (medium-heavyweight class) of the Tokyo International Jiu-Jitsu Open Championship 2009.

Camacho won a gold medal in the two-day tournament held at the Tokyo Budoh-Kan, Ayase, Adachi-ku, Tokyo, Japan, after prevailing over Purebred Lloyd Irvin stable mate Hadrian Torres and Strapple North's Kota Matsunaga.

Back in local events, action in the 2009 Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament continued at the REM Centre with the Sizzlers posting the biggest win of the week.

The Sizzlers downed leaders Air Benders to gain their first win. Despite the lost, Air Benders are still on top of the six-team field with their 18-10 record, followed by Katipuneros (17-11), Magnum (15-13), Bombers (13-14), Star Aces (11-17), and Sizzlers (10-18).

In basketball, the 2009 IT&E Inter-Government/Business Basketball League started its playoffs last week and from eight teams, only six remained standing.

Booted out of the league after absorbing back-to-back losses were CPA-Accounting and Micronesian Brokers, Inc. Left to battle it out for the championship are pennant champion Hyatt, DCCA, IT&E, Tinian, Docomo, and PSS.

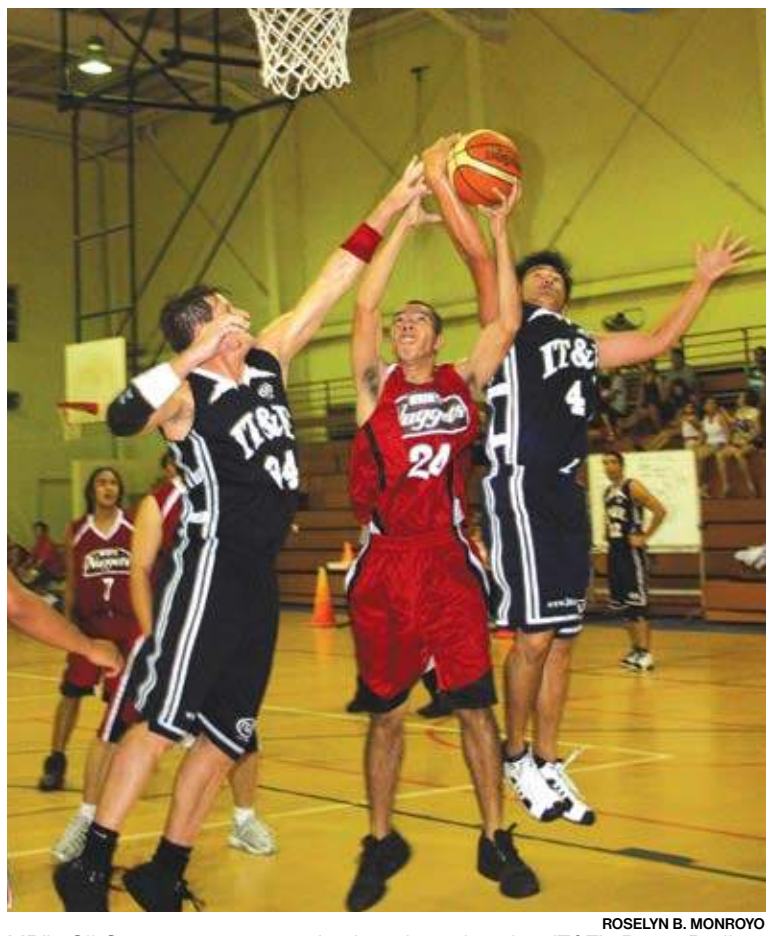
Still in basketball, all teams in the open division of the PILCOWA caging had tasted defeat.

Defending champion Diamond Ali'i had its three-game winning run snapped by IT&E, which in its next game suffered a loss at the hands of Saipan Fresh

The only unbeaten team in the PILCOWA caging is Ebisuya, which swept the first round of the masters division.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Fresh's Jorge De Guzman, right and IT&E's Peter Mendiola battle for the loose ball during their game in the PILCOWA caging at the JP Centre Basketball Court last week.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MBI's Gil Gapor, center, goes for the rebound against IT&E's Bruce Berline, left, and Ryan Sanciangco during their game in the government/business caging at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Sizzlers' Keno San Pablo goes for a smash during a game in the 2009 Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament at the REM Centre.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Winners of the Island SK8 Society's skateboard competition pose for a group photo.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kirk Schuler serves while teammate Peter Loyola looks on during their men's open doubles game against Torgun Smith and Wendell Roden in the Inaugural Tan Holdings Tennis Classic at the AMP tennis courts.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A 6-Pack's Derrick Tudela waits for the pitch from Team Fuege during the opening of the Budweisers softball league at the Capital Hill Ballfield last week.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A young boy negotiates one of the ramps at the Saipan Skate Park in Middle Road during the Island SK8 Society's skateboard competition.

Historic week for tennis community

CNMI tennis had a historic week, as the Inaugural Tan Holdings Tennis Classic drew a record number of players for its two-weekend event.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Johnson lead Hawks past Mavericks

Joe Johnson scored 31 points and the Atlanta Hawks ended a streak of five winless trips to Dallas with an 80-75 victory over the Mavericks on Saturday night.

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Pros conquer Hell of Marianas

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Professional riders lived up to expectations as Russian national champion Alexandre Bagenov ruled the grueling 3rd Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle on Saturday and former Olympian Amber Halliday topped the women's division.

Bagenov, who races for an Italian pro cycling team, completed the tough 100-kilometer event in three hours, three minutes and 25.88 seconds, just less than two minutes shy off the Hell record of 3:02.22.62 posted by Saipan's Eli Torgeson last year. Torgeson was the winner of the first two editions of Hell, but could not make it a three-peat this year as he left the island late last year.

With Torgeson gone, focus for the weekend's race was concentrated on Russian pros, a couple of Korean and Japanese riders, and the Australian pro Halliday.

Halliday was the third overall finisher of the race and first in the women's division, besting last year's runner-up Chiyo Lombard of Guam and home bet and 2008 champion Mieko Carey.

Halliday, who competed in the rowing competition in the Olympics and World Championships before switching to cycling last year, submitted 3:13:20 in last weekend's race to shatter Carey's record (3:28:05). Lombard timed in at

See PROS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Russia's Eugeniy Smarchkov, right, and Alexandre Bagenov raise their arms in triumph after completing the 3rd Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle on Saturday. Inset, Australian pro Amber Halliday nears the finish line.

Hyatt, Tinian stay alive

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan and Tinian survived must-win games in the 2009 IT&E Inter-Government/Business Basketball League, crushing separate foes on Friday at the Gil-

See HYATT on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Hyatt Regency Saipan's Dave Sablan, left, goes for a baseline shot against CPA-Accounting's Kirk Schuler during their game in the government/business caging at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium on Friday.

AP source: Pacquiao, Mayweather close to deal

DAVE SKRETTA
AP SPORTS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. have signed off on the major issues in the negotiation for a bout on March 13, and contracts could be signed in the next few days, a person with knowledge of the discussions told The Associated Press.

Top Rank promoter Bob Arum met with Pacquiao in his native Philippines on Friday and the champion—who has held belts from flyweight to welterweight—agreed to terms with only minor changes, said the person, who requested anonymity because the sides agreed not to speak publicly during negotiations.

Arum planned to return to the United States on Sunday and present the amended terms to Golden Boy Promotions chief executive Richard Schaefer, the person said. Schaefer is negotiating on behalf of Mayweather and his promotional company.

An announcement could come Tuesday, which would coincide with Arum's 78th birthday.

No site has been determined, but

See PACQUIAO on Page 26

AP

Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, speaks during a post-fight press conference following his WBO welterweight boxing title fight win over Miguel Cotto, of Puerto Rico, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2009 in Las Vegas.

SCS dethrones Koblerville in U12 league

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Community School and Dandan Elementary School had their names put in perpetual trophies after winning in the finals of the 2009 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League on Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

SCS dethroned 2008 champion Ko-

See SCS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Players and coaches of Saipan Community School and Dandan Elementary School pose with their trophies after ruling the 2009 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League on Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.